FIRST REPORT | FOURTH SESSION | FORTIETH PARLIAMENT

Report on the Budget 2016 Consultations

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

NOVEMBER 2015

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

November 13, 2015

To the Honourable
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the Fourth Session of the 40th Parliament.

The Report covers the work of the Committee in regard to the Budget 2016 consultations, and was approved unanimously by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Wm. Scott Hamilton, MLA
Chair

Table of Contents

Composition of the Committee i

Terms of Reference ii

Executive Summary iv

Budget 2016 Consultation Process 1

K-12 Education 8

Advanced Education 12

Fiscal Policy 18

Health 22

Environment 28

Social Services 32

Natural Resources 37

Sport, Culture and Arts 42

Transportation and Transit 45

Public Safety 49

Summary of Recommendations 52

Appendix A: Public Hearing Witnesses 58

Appendix B: Written and Video Submissions 63

Appendix C: Online Survey Respondents 65

Composition of the Committee

Members

Wm. Scott Hamilton, MLA	Chair	Delta North
Carole James, MLA	Deputy Chair	Victoria-Beacon Hill
Dan Ashton, MLA		Penticton
Spencer Chandra Herbert, MLA *(from September 8, 2015)*		Vancouver-West End
Eric Foster, MLA		Vernon-Monashee
Simon Gibson, MLA		Abbotsford-Mission
George Heyman, MLA		Vancouver-Fairview
Gary Holman, MLA *(to September 8, 2015)*		Saanich North and the Islands
Mike Morris, MLA		Prince George-Mackenzie
Jane Jae Kyung Shin, MLA *(to September 8, 2015)*		Burnaby-Lougheed
Claire Trevena, MLA *(from September 8, 2015)*		North Island
John Yap, MLA		Richmond-Steveston

Clerks to the Committee

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees

Susan Sourial, Committee Clerk

Research Staff

Lisa Hill, Lead, Committee Research Analyst

Aaron Ellingsen, Committee Researcher

Andrea Frost, Auxiliary Committee Researcher

Helen Morrison, Committee Research Analyst

Terms of Reference

On February 24, 2015, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered:

1. To examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act [SBC 2000, c.23]* and, in particular, to:
    a. Conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the committee considers appropriate;
    b. Prepare a report no later than November 15, 2015 on the results of those consultations; and
2.
    a. To consider and make recommendations on the annual reports, rolling three-year service plans and budgets of the following statutory officers:
        i. Auditor General
        ii. Chief Electoral Officer
        iii. Conflict of Interest Commissioner
        iv. Information and Privacy Commissioner
        v. Merit Commissioner
        vi. Ombudsperson
        vii. Police Complaint Commissioner
        viii. Representative for Children and Youth; and

    b. To examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to other matters brought to the Committee's attention by any of the Officers listed in 2 (a) above.

3. To be the Committee referred to in the sections 19, 20, 21 and 23 of the *Auditor General Act, S.B.C. 2003, c. 2* and that the performance report in section 22 of the *Auditor General Act, S.B.C. 2003, c. 2*, be referred to the Committee.

In addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the Committee shall be empowered:

a. to appoint of their number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee;
b. to sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
c. to adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and
d. to retain personnel as required to assist the Committee,

and shall report to the House as soon as possible, or following any adjournment, or at the next following Session, as the case may be; to deposit the original of its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly during a period of adjournment and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, the Chair shall present all reports to the Legislative Assembly.

Executive Summary

This year's public consultations on the provincial budget began on September 15, 2015 with the release of the "Budget 2016 Consultation" paper by the Minister of Finance. Over an approximately five-week period, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the Committee) held in-person public hearings in eight communities across the province. The Committee greatly appreciates and values the opportunity to travel in order to connect in person with individuals and organizations in communities in all regions of the province. To accommodate the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly, which began on September 28, the schedule of community public hearings was adapted through the expanded use of teleconference and video conference facilities, including Skype, to connect with presenters in communities around B.C. The Committee hosted five of these virtual public hearings. The Committee also invited written, video, and audio submissions, as well as responses to an online survey. In total, 572 submissions were received by the October 15, 2015 deadline for public input. Copies of submissions made to the Committee during the budget consultation process are available upon request from the Parliamentary Committees Office.

This report summarizes key themes from the consultations, and makes 63 recommendations for the provincial government to consider for Budget 2016. All of the recommendations were unanimously agreed to by Committee Members. British Columbians expressed the need to focus on some high-level priorities, including: the need for balanced budgets, addressing the high cost of housing and rental accommodations, restoration of Adult Basic Education funding, adequate funding for K-12 education, strategic investment in the natural resource sector while maintaining environmental biodiversity and ecosystem health, support for provincial credit unions, increased funding and services for those most in need, and continued investment in provincial infrastructure.

A number of recommendations included in this report are ones that the Committee wishes to reiterate from budget consultation reports that relate to the Budget 2014 and 2015 Consultation processes. References to recommendations from previous years' reports are noted in parentheses at the end of each recommendation, including the year and recommendation number. Feedback and submissions received during this year's consultation process provided information that substantiates the reiteration of these recommendations, as they address issues that remain on the minds of British Columbians.

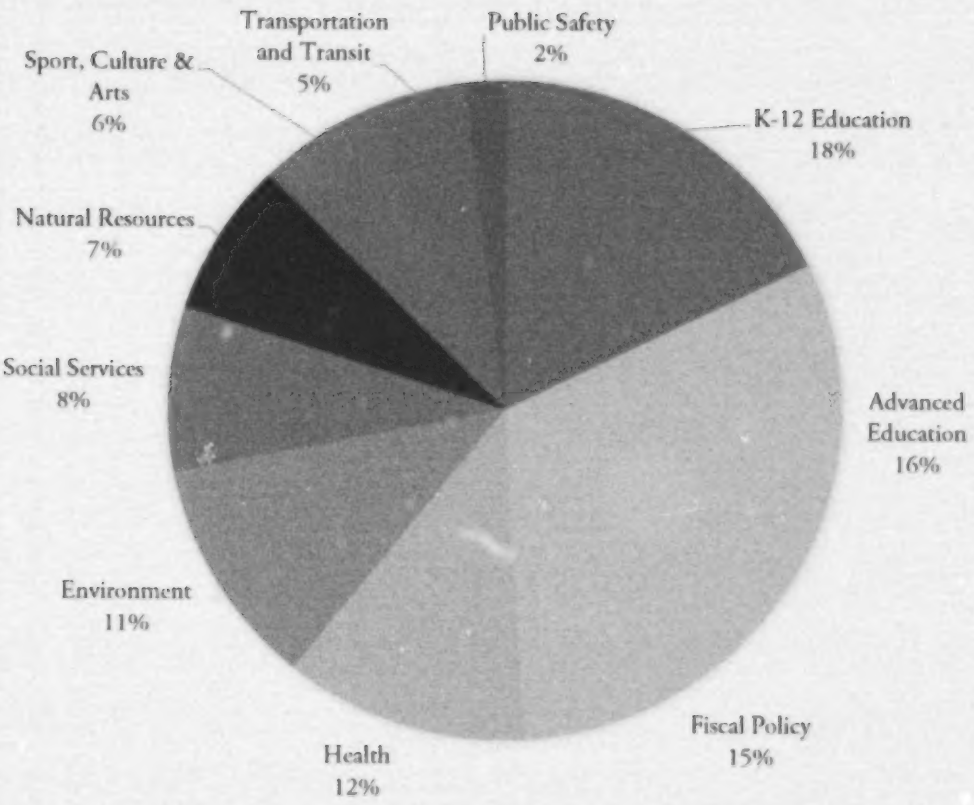
Recommendations in the area of fiscal policy affirm the desire to maintain balanced budgets, and include ways to support B.C. businesses and entrepreneurs as drivers of economic growth, and ways to generate additional government revenues through review of existing taxation mechanisms. The section on natural resource development proposes measures to promote and enhance B.C.'s valuable

natural resource sector. Suggestions are also made to promote B.C.'s technology sector, and to renew efforts to promote clean energy, address climate change, and protect the environment, including biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Several recommendations are made in the areas of health and education. They include recommendations that focus on increased funding for programs and services for those who face mental health challenges, including children and youth, as well as focus on hospice and bereavement programs, the HPV vaccine and the health impacts of sugar-sweetened beverages. Recommendations related to education include funding for operations and capital expenditures, as well as literacy, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language programs, student grants and skills training to maintain B.C.'s competitive edge.

The Committee makes recommendations related to social services to assist B.C. families and to target resources towards those in need, and also support for arts and culture groups, whose submissions outline the important social and economic benefits that the arts bring to B.C. communities. Finally, there are a number of recommendations that relate to transportation and public safety priorities, including increased funding for transportation infrastructure, public transit and alternative justice models.

Topics within the report are ordered to reflect the magnitude of recommendations received on each topic, and are displayed from the most to the fewest, according to the overall number of submissions (including in-person presentations and written or video submissions) received related to a particular topic. The chart below summarizes the topics that arose throughout the consultation process. Sub-topics within topics are organized alphabetically and the recommendation(s) for each topic are ordered to align with the alphabetical organization of the sub-themes. The order of recommendations in the report is not intended to suggest priority.


Transportation and Transit 5%
Public Safety 2%
Sport, Culture & Arts 6%
K-12 Education 18%
Natural Resources 7%
Social Services 8%
Advanced Education 16%
Environment 11%
Fiscal Policy 15%
Health 12%

Budget 2016 Consultation Process

Section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* requires the Minister of Finance to make public a budget consultation paper by September 15 each year. The paper must include a fiscal forecast, key issues to be addressed in the next provincial budget, and information on how members of the public may provide their views on those issues. Upon its release, the paper stands referred to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the "Committee"). The Committee then conducts consultations as it considers appropriate, and must make public a report on the results of those consultations by November 15.

Budget Consultation Paper

Released on September 15, 2015, this year's paper, "Budget 2016 Consultation," outlined the B.C. government's commitment to balanced budgets, built on modest economic growth, prudent forecasts, and strong expenditure management. The paper described how a balanced budget helps keep B.C.'s debt affordable and how the province's triple-A credit rating saves taxpayers millions of dollars, which frees up money to continue to support government programs. The paper additionally outlined information about lower taxes and new tax credits for British Columbians, supports to promote housing affordability, increased health care funding and investments in education and skills development. British Columbians were invited to participate in the consultations by ranking responses to four questions and providing input on options for government to consider to help make housing more affordable for those most in need without hurting families that already own a home. The questions and an analysis of responses are presented on pages 3 to 6.

Finance Minister's Briefing

The Minister of Finance, Hon. Mike de Jong, Q.C., MLA, appeared before the Committee on September 15, 2015, to discuss the budget consultation paper and first quarterly report for 2015/16. During the presentation, the Finance Minister stated that the budget for 2015/16 is forecast to have a surplus of $277 million, a moderate decrease of $7 million from the $284 million surplus projected in February. Provincial sales taxes and property transfer taxes are increasing over the forecast amount, with property transfer taxes $200 million more than originally projected. The fiscal plan also includes $380 million forecast in statutorily required spending as a result of forest fire suppression.

Committee Members heard how B.C.'s debt as a percentage of GDP has decreased and that rating agencies are also looking at debt-to-revenue as another measurement being considered to determine economic health in a jurisdiction. In relation to the provincial economic outlook, the Finance Minister reported that the province's labour market is growing, with job growth forecast to increase by 0.7 percent in 2015 and unemployment remaining well below the national average.

The Finance Minister reported that the provincial government's objective to fully eliminate the direct operating debt by 2019-2020 is on target. If this happens, this would be the first time since 1975-76 that the B.C. government has not had a direct operating debt. He concluded the presentation with a brief summary of other key economic indicators, such as global economic conditions, including those in China and Asia, as well as commodity and financial market volatility.

Consultation Methods

Several methods were used to collect public input on budget 2016 recommendations, including community public hearings, written, audio, and video submissions, and an online survey. The Committee's landing page was updated for the consultation process, and information on how to participate was publicized in a number of ways, including through the use of print, online and social media.

On August 27, 2015, a province-wide news release was issued announcing the Committee's consultation plans and the locations of the public hearings. Newspaper advertisements were also placed in major provincial and community newspapers. A second province-wide news release was distributed on September 15, 2015 announcing the start of the consultation process and how to participate.

The work of the Committee was also promoted through social media. Regular updates and announcements of Committee activities were posted through Facebook and Twitter. Facebook advertisements were also used to invite submissions and to increase public awareness of the consultations.

Public Hearing Presentations

During the consultation period, the Committee held a series of public hearings, including eight sessions in communities around the province. To accommodate the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly, which began on September 28, the schedule of community public hearings was adapted through the expanded use of teleconference and video conference facilities, including Skype, to connect with presenters in communities around the province. The Committee hosted five of these virtual public hearing presentations.

In total, the Committee heard 197 oral presentations from individuals and a range of organizations representing business, industry, community service providers, local government, labour, and other sectors. The list of the presenters from the public hearings is available in Appendix A.

Written and Video Submissions

Over the course of the consultations, 156 written submissions and one video submission were received through the online submission form on the Committee's website, by lettermail, or by fax. The names of all individuals and organizations that made a written or video submission are listed in Appendix B.

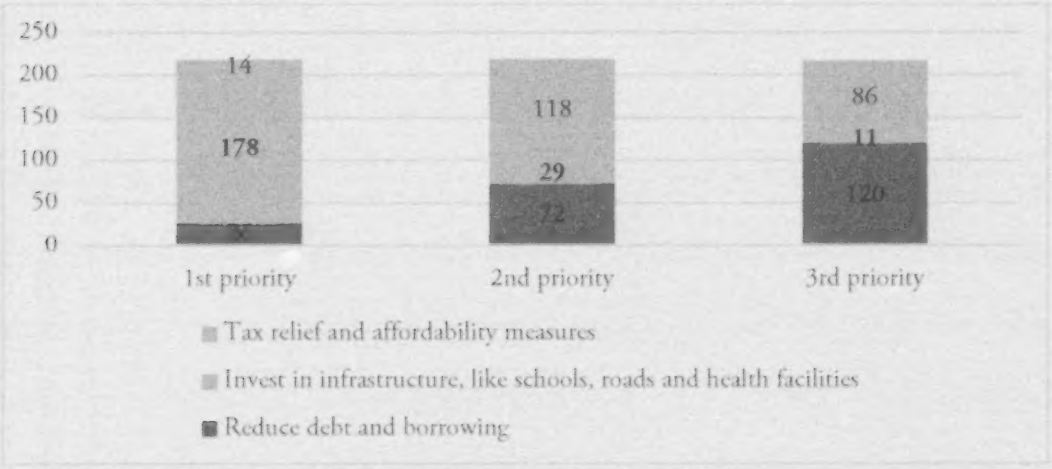
Online Survey Responses

A total of 218 individuals and organizations completed the online survey containing questions from the budget consultation paper. All of the online survey respondents are listed in Appendix C.

The budget consultation paper asked British Columbians to rank responses to four questions in order of priority and to provide input on options for government to consider to help make housing more affordable for those most in need without hurting families that already own a home. The questions and a tally of responses, along with graphical representations of the data are provided below:

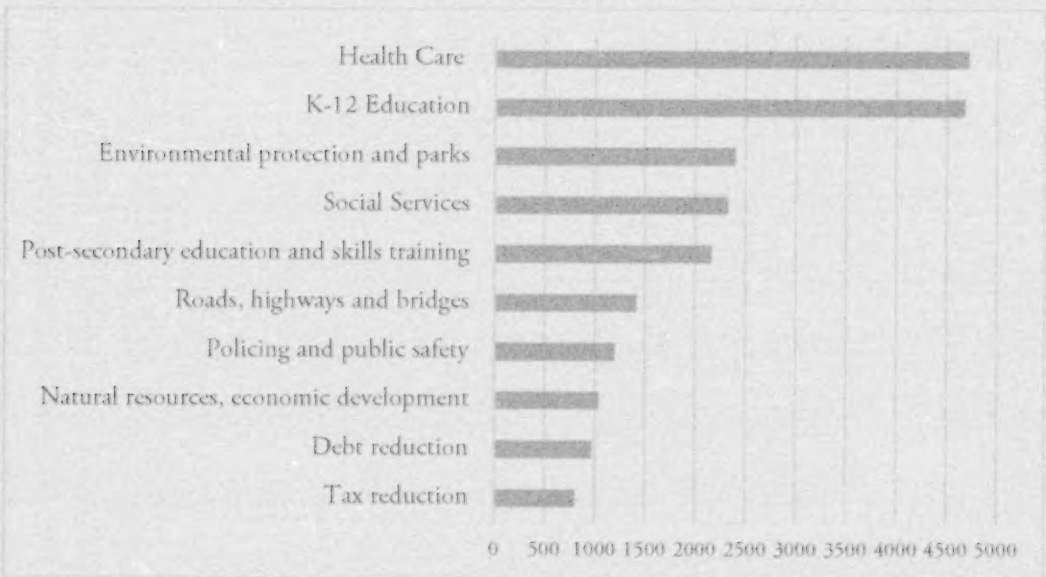
1. British Columbia is one of the very few jurisdictions in the world with a budget surplus and a triple-A credit rating—which helps reduce government borrowing and keeps debt affordable. A budget surplus gives the government flexibility to make choices. Using a ranking of 1 (most important) to 3 (least important), how should the government prioritize the flexibility these surpluses offer?

	1st priority	2nd priority	3rd priority
Reduce debt and borrowing	26	72	120
Invest in infrastructure, like schools, roads and health facilities	178	29	11
Tax relief and affordability measures	14	118	86



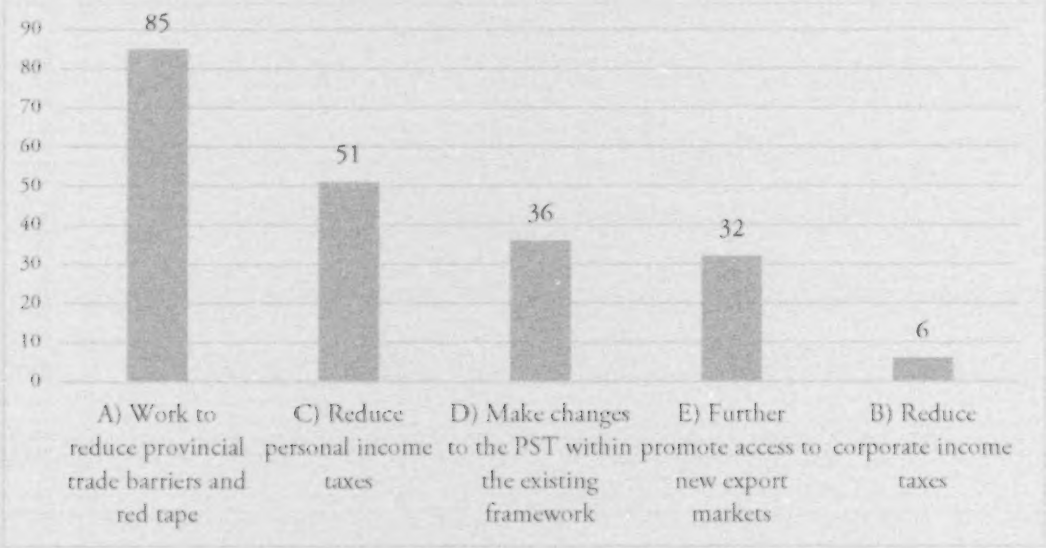
2. B.C. is working to protect priority services and keep life affordable for families within a balanced budget and declining debt burden. If you had one dollar in new funding to share across programs and services the government delivers, how would you divide it up?

	$ allotted
Health care	4,723
K-12 Education	4,679
Environmental protection and parks	2,396
Social Services	2,325
Post-secondary education and skills training	2,160
Roads, highways and bridges	1,416
Policing and public safety	1,193
Natural resources, economic development	1,041
Debt reduction	973
Tax reduction	804



3. British Columbia has one of the most diversified economies among the Canadian provinces. How should we continue our work to make job-creating industries more competitive? (Choose your top priority)

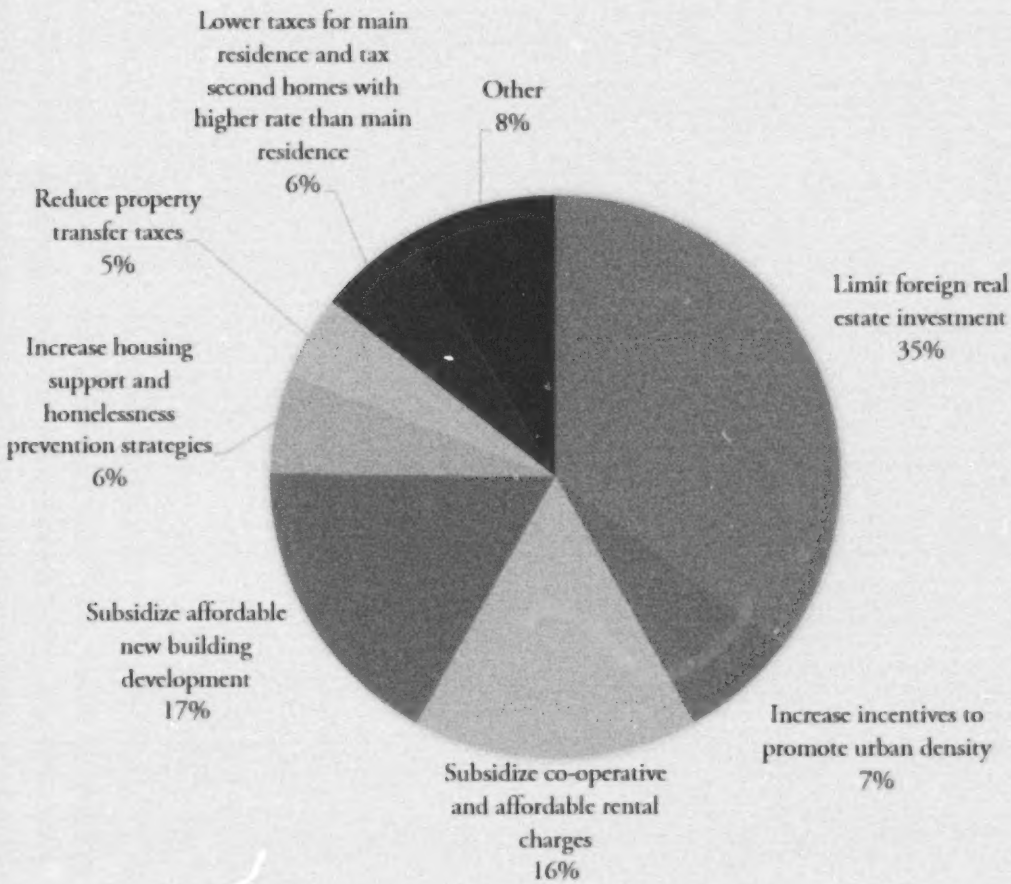
	# top priority
A) Work to reduce provincial trade barriers and red tape	85
B) Reduce corporate income taxes	6
C) Reduce personal income taxes	51
D) Make changes to the PST within the existing framework	36
E) Further promote access to new export markets	32



4. What options could government consider to help make housing more affordable for those most in need without hurting families that already own a home? (Choose your top priority)

	# top priority
A) Enhance assistance for first-time homebuyers	61
B) Further encourage new construction to add to the housing supply	38
C) To increase affordability without negatively impact families that already own a home, government could [fill in the blank]	116*

*Top themes for suggestions provided through option "C" above:


Lower taxes for main residence and tax second homes with higher rate than main residence 6%
Other 8%
Reduce property transfer taxes 5%
Limit foreign real estate investment 35%
Increase housing support and homelessness prevention strategies 6%
Subsidize affordable new building development 17%
Increase incentives to promote urban density 7%
Subsidize co-operative and affordable rental charges 16%

Meetings Schedule

During the consultation period, the Committee held a series of public hearings, including eight sessions in communities around the province. To accommodate the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly, which began on September 28, the schedule of community public hearings was adapted through the expanded use of teleconference and video conference facilities, including Skype, to connect with presenters in communities around the province. The Committee hosted five of these virtual public hearings.

Date	*Type*	*Location*
March 11, 2015	Organizational Meeting	Victoria
September 15, 2015	Minister's Briefing; Public Hearing	Victoria
September 16, 2015	Public Hearing	Castlegar Kelowna
September 17, 2015	Public Hearing	Nanaimo Kamloops
September 21, 2015	Public Hearing	Vancouver
September 28, 2015	Public Hearing (teleconference, Skype, and in-person session: Delta)	Victoria
September 29, 2015	Public Hearing (video conference, teleconference, and Skype session: Prince George)	Victoria
September 30, 2015	Public Hearing (video conference, teleconference, and Skype session: Williams Lake, Terrace, Dawson Creek)	Victoria
September 30, 2015	Public Hearing (teleconference, Skype, and in-person session: Abbotsford)	Victoria
October 7, 2015	Public Hearing (video conference, teleconference, and Skype session: Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Cranbrook, Quesnel)	Victoria
October 13, 2015	Public Hearing	Surrey
October 14, 2015	Public Hearing	Richmond
October 22, 2015	Deliberations	Victoria
October 28, 2015	Deliberations	Victoria
November 4, 2015	Deliberations	Victoria
November 5, 2015	Deliberations	Victoria
November 10, 2015	Deliberations	Vancouver
November 12, 2015	Deliberations; Adoption of Report	Victoria

K-12 Education

Submissions including recommendations for K-12 education constituted a significant portion of the public input on Budget 2016, with the highest overall number of submissions received for a single topic. The second question of the online survey asked "If you had one dollar in new funding to share across programs and services the government delivers, how would you divide it up?" Respondents allocated K-12 education a combined average of 22 cents out of every dollar, a joint outcome shared only with health spending. According to the results of this survey, no other area of expense exceeded K-12 education as a spending priority. With one third of written submissions highlighting a K-12 education-related recommendation, this is clearly an area of focus for many British Columbians.

School districts, teachers, advocacy organizations and members of the public made submissions highlighting the importance of allocating adequate government funding for a strong K-12 school system. Increased and sustained funding to ensure teachers have adequate classroom supports in place were frequent requests throughout written and oral submissions to the Committee. Investment in seismic and capital infrastructure, provision of sufficient learning support staff and financing for classroom supplies were also common emerging themes.

Capital funding

The Committee heard from a large number of Boards of Education from across the province, through written submissions, in-person and video presentations. There were many recommendations aimed at the need for providing additional funding for seismic upgrades, increased maintenance and the provision of additional school facilities in certain locations. Additional and targeted funding was requested to address the needs of aging school facilities and to meet forecast demand for additional student placement across specific areas of the province.

The Board of Education for School District No. 38 (Richmond) presented to the Committee and elaborated on their focus for allocation of funding for seismic upgrades. They suggested it would be appropriate to take a broader perspective than only seismic mitigation within the scope of this program. Representatives from School District No. 38 stated that as many of the schools that receive seismic funding also have significantly aging electrical and mechanical infrastructure, it would be more cost efficient and provide for greater impact if these funding upgrades were done concurrently.

Other school boards and individuals added suggestions for creating a more streamlined and transparent process for the approval of major capital projects, as well as the need to consider recognition of international students in the capital funding formula.

General funding

Over 50 written submissions were made to the Committee pertaining to the importance of providing ongoing, stable and predictable funding for the K-12 education system. Individuals wrote to the Committee expressing concerns regarding the lack of funding for basic school supplies in the classroom. Many stipulated additional support was vital for teacher-librarians and also to provide new and incremental funding to enable the effective implementation of the new curriculum.

The Committee heard from the British Columbia Principals' and Vice Principals' Association (BCPVPA), who represent the professional and employment interests of the province's public school-based administrators with over 2,100 voluntary members. They illustrated the importance of adequate school district funding for the actual costs of statutory and contractual obligations related to benefits, the Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and WorkSafeBC. Further, the BCPVPA recommended additional investment in leadership development to enable the Ministry of Education to develop a comprehensive program to recruit, retain and support professional learning. Other submissions echoed these requests, with repeated calls to review the compensation funding model for exempt staff.

Operational funding

Corresponding to previous budget consultations, the Committee received a number of submissions on the topic of K-12 funding. Numerous boards of education, advocacy organizations, associations and individuals across the province presented or sent written submissions to the Committee requesting enhanced core funding.

The BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), which represents the province's 41,000 public school teachers, reiterated its previous request for additional funding for K-12 education. The BCTF also requested public education funding be increased to ensure that the Teacher Education Fund is able to increase teaching staff to support areas of greater need.

The BC School Trustees Association, a professional body with branches across the province, presented to the Committee in Kelowna, stressing it is time for a detailed review of the current funding formula, particularly in relation to the exempt staff compensation freeze. This was a view shared by the majority of organizations and individuals presenting to the Committee on this topic. Other suggestions included a request to increase operating grants to bring levels up to the national average, as well as examining the funding ratio per student so that schools can continue to provide education in the face of existing funding pressures.

Special Needs

A large number of individuals wrote to the Committee with requests to consider prioritizing learning support in K-12 schools. Recommendations were made to maintain or increase funding for: Education Assistants, school counsellors, Learning Assistance teachers, English as a Second Language (ESL) staff, childcare workers, speech and language pathologists, integration support workers and school psychologists.

The Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee (CYFAC), representing 21 members in Vancouver, wrote to the Committee outlining the importance of adequate support for students with special needs. Other submissions expanded on the additional supports required for these students, such as the possibility of reviewing the supplementary funding grants for students with special needs, with a view to increasing funds and targeting much needed support. Written submissions included requests to re-stabilize critical early childhood development programs, decrease wait times for support and assessment services, as well as to consider mandated training in behavioral supports for teachers, support staff, principals and all district administrators.

Conclusions

Aligning with the previous year's requests for K-12 education, the Committee acknowledges the importance of providing adequate funding and support for this sector. The recommendations presented to the Committee from organizations and individuals across the province suggest current funding levels and assistance are inadequate, which is causing significant operational and program delivery problems in schools throughout B.C.

Three main recommendations are made for this sector. First, the Committee recommends that government ensure sufficient and timely capital funding to provide for facility improvements, seismic upgrades and also to facilitate the building of new schools in areas that are struggling to cope with increasing student numbers. The Committee ascertains that additional funding is necessary to ensure the provision of quality public education and to properly meet the increased costs that schools are currently facing.

Finally, the Committee recommends a review of the Ministry of Education funding formula relating to programs, services and administrative staffing compensation, to ensure this sector is properly supported. By properly investing in this sector, the Committee suggests that economic and community goals have a better chance of being realized.

Summary of Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations
1. Provide adequate capital funding to school districts for facility improvements, seismic upgrades and additional schools in rapidly-growing communities. **(2013: #25 and 2014: #23)**
2. Provide stable, sustainable and adequate funding to enable school districts to fulfil their responsibility to continue to provide access to quality public education, with recognition of the increased costs that school districts have incurred. **(2014: #22)**
3. Review the Ministry of Education funding formula for programs and services, as well as administrative staff compensation levels to ensure adequate and competitive compensation.

Advanced Education

Submissions on post-secondary education constituted a large portion of the public input on Budget 2016. The second question of the online survey asked "If you had one dollar in new funding to share across programs and services the government delivers, how would you divide it up?" Post-secondary education was allocated an average of 10 cents out of every dollar and also figured prominently in a large proportion of written and oral submissions. With such a high and constant response rate over the entire consultation period, advanced education is clearly a priority that reaches across the entire province.

Colleges and universities, student unions, literacy outreach organizations, public library representatives, advocacy organizations, faculty associations and members of the public made submissions to the Committee on the topic of advanced education. The importance of relevant skills training to support the B.C. Skills for Jobs Blueprint, provide for First Nations students and meet the future requirements of the workplace were common emerging themes.

Recommendations put forth to the Committee included calls for increased budgeting for operating and capital needs, and multiple requests for a comprehensive review of the existing funding model. In addition, the Committee received a considerable number of submissions on topics focusing on literacy outreach, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. Equitable access and affordability issues, and the necessity to address growing demands for post-secondary education in some regional areas were also highlighted.

Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language

Many submissions that were sent to the Committee on the subject of Adult Basic Education (ABE) stressed the need for sustainable funding to be restored for the purpose of supporting ABE programs in B.C. Key representatives from universities and colleges, along with numerous individuals across the province, made submissions suggesting that the financial assistance given to these programs should be reinstated to the $6.9 million that had been previously allocated. The Committee acknowledges that ABE and ESL programs may be offered in educational institutions that provide either K-12 or advanced education curriculums.

Along with requests for funding for ABE, were a large number of submissions regarding funding for post-secondary programming for English as a Second Language (ESL). In Kamloops, the Committee heard from the Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association, an association that speaks on behalf of faculty staff who teach locally and at a number of regional centres. Among their suggestions was a need for an ongoing commitment of at least $22 million to support the provincially funded ESL programs which are delivered by B.C.'s post-secondary institutions.

Other topics of notable shared interest were the request to provide consistent, long-term funding for Aboriginal learners, access to support for upgrading education and also requests to enhance the funds to the Adult Upgrading Grant (AUG) program. The linkages to these programs and provincial requirements, as outlined in the BC Skills for Jobs Blueprint, were also highlighted by many educational institutions.

Capital funding

The Committee heard a presentation from the Student Association of the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT Student Association) which outlined their recommendation to permit universities to engage in self-financing capital projects, such as building new residences on campus.

BC Colleges also presented to the Committee with a number of suggestions to enhance operating grants for capital improvements and infrastructure development. Their submission replicated a common focus emerging from a number of other representatives from student unions across the province. Many other colleges presented information to the Committee highlighting the need for increased investment to modernize information technology, add new instructional space and complete necessary seismic and energy-efficiency upgrades.

Specific requests were received from representatives of Simon Fraser University, asking the Committee to reiterate previous support for doubling the size of the SFU Surrey Campus. They asked that the Committee's previous recommendations of 2011 and 2013, to expand the size of the SFU Surrey campus from 2,500 to 5,000 students be reiterated, to allow for the first phase of this expansion to commence in 2016.

General funding

In Richmond, the Committee heard from the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC which represents the interests of faculty and staff at B.C. universities, colleges and institutions. Their presentation reiterated the common request to consider an extensive review of the post-secondary funding model to ensure funding is fair and equitable on a per-student basis. Additional shared suggestions included establishing a merit-based annual scholarship program for graduates and increasing the Aboriginal Services Plan (ASP) to allow additional support for Aboriginal students.

Numerous student unions submitted requests for university costs to be decreased by maintaining or reducing the 2 percent tuition cap for all programs. Other submissions asked for additional resources for provision of adequate open source ancillary teaching materials and textbooks. Specific programs that were mentioned as requiring additional stable and predictable funding included the BC Knowledge Development Fund and the BC Open Textbook Program.

Literacy programs

A large number of submissions were made to the Committee calling for annual funding for literacy coordination to facilitate community literacy programs and services. The Literacy Matters Abbotsford Task Group, who have membership from 14 community associations across Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley, made proposals that were reflected by other literacy outreach organizations across the province. They suggested that $2.5 million should be provided annually to continue to increase literacy rates in their communities. Decoda Literacy Solutions, which a provincial literacy organization that supports community-based literacy programs and initiatives in over 400 communities across B.C., presented to the Committee and echoed the requests heard by the Committee to ask government to provide dedicated funding for literacy programs.

Requests were made to ensure that the funding is maintained over multiple years, bringing stability to literacy work. The needs and long term benefits of improved literacy were reiterated by literacy outreach organizations, who highlighted the beneficial impact that their services provide, such as enabling people to participate in the workforce, and to participate fully in their community and society as a whole.

Operational funding

The request to allow institutions to access reserves over a multi-year window was another common theme emerging from many submissions. Universities submitted requests for a comprehensive analysis of deferred maintenance costs, asking for the development of a fiscal framework to enable them to deal with identified maintenance issues.

The BC Association of Institutes and Universities (BCAIU), representing seven post-secondary institutions in B.C., presented a written submission to the Committee, emphasizing the value of allowing access to financial reserves. They also elaborated on the benefits of removing the directive to balance financial performance on an annual basis.

The Research Universities' Council of BC, representing the interests of the six major universities in B.C., presented to the Committee in Vancouver. They reiterated the importance of maintaining the province's commitment to the BC Knowledge Development Fund while also providing some important context as to why it is important to commit to continued post-secondary funding. The linkages to sustained capacity and quality of post-secondary education to propel the regional economy forward was a key underlying theme in their suggestions, which included increasing the operating grant, reinvesting the $50 million that has been reduced over the last three years, and investing that amount in targeted areas.

Partnerships

Many submissions outlined the progress that has already taken place in the province with respect to working collaboratively across academic institutions, business and industry. There were some suggestions for ways in which partnerships could further be enhanced. Specific recommendations from education providers included the suggestion of allocating $3 million in one-time funding to help leverage B.C.'s portion of federal funding to support further innovation between universities and colleges, business and industry.

The Committee received a written submission from the University of British Columbia, who reiterated the comments of many other educational providers on this topic. They and other institutions welcome opportunities to work with sector partners and the Province to strategize how best to respond to skills shortages. By exploring system-wide solutions, they believe it is possible to foster a vibrant and financially sustainable post-secondary system to serve all British Columbians and continue to grow our economy.

Skills training

Specific skills shortages were mentioned in multiple submissions from colleges, universities and representatives from business and industry. There were many references to the need to make a multi-year investment plan to target investments and build capacity, allowing for programs to adapt to labour market demands.

Particular concerns were reported in trades, technology, and science and engineering programs. Representatives from universities, colleges and trade schools across the province suggested additional funding should be made available to develop and pilot new sector-wide courses specifically relating to the highest demand occupational areas. Other suggestions included setting aside funding for a targeted Completion Grant, over and above the existing completion grant, to provide further debt relief to students who complete a program in a field that has been designated as critical or in need by the Province.

Student grants

The Committee received a total of 13 submissions from university student unions, colleges and umbrella organizations detailing specific requests to implement needs-based student grants. A common message relayed was the damaging impacts that current funding pressures are having on post-secondary institutions, adding to challenges in providing access to affordable and meaningful education resources.

A range of potential solutions were brought forward. One of the Canadian Federation of Students' suggestions, to consider reducing, or perhaps even eliminating interest on student loans altogether, emerged as a common request.

Conclusions

As in previous Finance and Government Service consultations, the importance of advanced education and funded programs for literacy is evidenced by the array of submissions presented to the Committee by individuals and organizations across the province. The ability to properly educate adults to allow personal fulfilment, to improve job prospects, and to facilitate economic stimulus, remains a top priority for British Columbians.

The concerns heard over long term funding in this area led the Committee to urge government to undertake a comprehensive review of post-secondary funding, including looking at current limitations to post-secondary institutions' ability to self-finance capital projects. Support was also given to reviewing opportunities for increasing operating grants and funding for capital projects related to infrastructure, teaching materials and equipment. Reiterating recommendations contained in the 2014 report, the Committee also recommends government reaffirm the commitment to double the size of the SFU Surrey campus. Also consistent with 2014 recommendations, the Committee encourages government investment for continued community literacy and outreach work, as well as ongoing support for ABE and ESL programs. The Committee agrees that investment in this area would allow exponential benefits to the province, equipping communities to better meet immediate and future skills requirements and support a healthy economy.

Acknowledging the need for capacity building to meet demand for targeted skills training, the Committee recommended investment in a multi-year investment plan in this area. To ensure a properly trained workforce, the Committee also echoes its 2014 recommendation that government establish a student grant program that improves program accessibility and affordability for students.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations

4. Restore full and sustained funding to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.[1] **(2013: #40 and 2014: #32)**
5. Provide funding support for capital projects related to infrastructure and equipment, such as building maintenance, renovations and projects related to seismic and efficiency upgrades. **(2013: #25 and 2014: #29)**
6. Recommit to the MOU signed with SFU and the Province on March 10, 2006 to double the size of SFU Surrey from 2,500 to 5,000 student FTEs by 2015. **(2013: #33)**
7. Address legislative, policy or other impediments that currently limit post-secondary institutions from financing self-supported capital projects. **(2013: #31 and 2014: #31)**
8. Undertake a comprehensive review of the post-secondary funding formula so that regional inequities and core funding for the system as a whole are adequately addressed. **(2013: #30 and 2014: #30)**
9. Provide support to enable more open source ancillary teaching materials and textbooks to be made available online to post-secondary research institutions, such as through the BC Open Textbook Program.
10. Provide multi-year annual funding of $2.5 million to continue coordinated community literacy work.[2] **(2013: #29 and 2014: #46)**
11. Increase operating grants to post-secondary institutions to address unfunded cost pressures and move to multi-year allotments for operating grants and deferred maintenance grants to help these institutions with their financial planning. **(2014: #27, #28)**
12. Commit to a multi-year investment plan to build capacity and meet demand for urgently-required skills training. **(2013: #34)**
13. Establish a student grant program that addresses student needs and provides incentives for completion and review the interest charged on B.C. student loans and review existing eligibility requirements for student loans. **(2013: #37, #38 and 2014: #34, #35)**

[1] This recommendation also relates to the K-12 Education topic in this report.
[2] This recommendation also relates to the K-12 Education topic in this report.

Fiscal Policy

The Committee heard from associations representing business, industry, accounting professionals and other sectors that offered recommendations around general fiscal policies and different areas related to taxation and government spending priorities.

In his presentation to the Committee regarding the release of the Budget Consultation Paper on September 15, 2015, the Minister of Finance outlined government's priorities for debt reduction, greater infrastructure investment and tax and cost reductions. He additionally noted some of the questions raised in the budget consultation survey related to determining priorities among services, job creation and affordable housing. Specific submissions to the Committee looked at the Provincial Sales Tax (PST), Property Transfer Tax and the Carbon Tax.

Balanced Budgets and Debt Reduction

A variety of organizations and individuals presented to the Committee or sent written submissions that supported the commitment to a balanced budget in 2016 and expressed support for ongoing efforts dedicated to provincial debt reduction. With global markets still volatile in many areas and sectors, and economic uncertainties presenting challenges for governments, the desire for continued economic stability and realistic growth was a prevalent theme throughout the submissions and presentations received by the Committee. Recommendations that underlined government's dedication to disciplined spending were expressed by many presenters.

Carbon Tax

A wide range of recommendations with differing viewpoints were brought to the Committee by a number of organizations and individuals in relation to the Carbon Tax. The Committee heard from representatives from several regional chamber of commerce organizations, including the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce and the Parksville and District Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, the Committee received presentations from Clean Energy Canada, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - BC Office, and a number of individuals who asked that government examine current policy related to the Carbon Tax and look at ways to ensure that the tax is performing in relation to the original intention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Credit Unions

The Committee heard from a significant number of the 42 credit unions that encompass the credit union system in B.C., including Island Savings, Coastal Community Credit Union, Central 1 Credit Union and Coast Capital Savings Credit Union. Representatives from the organizations who took the

opportunity to present an oral or written submission to the Committee came forward with a unified recommendation to ask that the current temporary deferment of the preferential tax rate be made permanent. The 2014 provincial budget called for the *Income Tax Act* to be amended to phase out the provincial preferential income tax treatment for credit unions over five years. The Committee heard how this change will cause the estimated effective tax rate on credit unions to rise considerably. It was additionally noted that if the preferential provincial tax rate for credit unions was removed, these organizations would pay a higher effective tax rate than chartered banks.

Representatives from the credit unions shared examples of local success stories with the Committee to illustrate the positive impact that credit unions can have in their communities through partnerships and sponsorships supporting not-for-profit and charitable organizations, as well as their relationships with small businesses and individuals. Many credit unions earmark a percentage of their pre-tax income to community investment, and the concern was expressed that this could be affected by increased taxes on credit unions in the future. The Committee wanted to ensure that their recommendation would be restricted to focus on B.C.-based credit unions and the B.C.-based operations of national credit union organizations.

Property Transfer Tax

Presenters from a variety of organizations, including the British Columbia Real Estate Association and the Canadian Homebuilders' Association of BC put forward recommendations to the Committee related to the Property Transfer Tax and the *Property Transfer Tax Act*, and asked the Committee to consider a recommendation asking for a review of the tax, as well as associated legislation and policies, particularly related to threshold levels in relation to the current real estate market in B.C.

Several presenters suggested that the Committee might want to consider making a recommendation to government to review practices and policies from other jurisdictions that have examined property transfer taxes in relation to their growing real estate markets.

Provincial Sales Tax

The Committee heard from a number of organizations that represent the retail and professional accounting sectors, including the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, Retail Council of Canada, Business Council of British Columbia and the Chartered Professional Accountants of BC, who brought forward recommendations in relation to the implementation of the Provincial Sales Tax (PST).

Presenters noted that the PST can create some burden for businesses wanting to invest in capital infrastructure, such as equipment and machinery, and asked the Committee to recommend that

government look at any anomalies related to capital expenditures that might exist in this area and examine opportunities to ensure improvements for businesses. Additionally, the Committee heard from the Vancouver Board of Trade and a selection of regional municipal organizations, who suggested that government should continue to explore policy or tax changes that would help to improve the competitiveness of B.C. businesses.

Technology, Research and Investment

The Committee heard from a number of organizations, including Genome BC and the LifeSciences British Columbia Society, that represent the technology and research sector, who came forward to present their ideas related to how government might continue to support ongoing advancement through collaboration with federal partners to attract and leverage venture capital investments through private sector and international investors.

Conclusions

As noted in the Budget 2016 Consultation paper, the B.C. government's commitment to balanced budgets, built on modest economic growth, prudent forecasts, and strong expenditure management, has withstood ongoing global economic uncertainty. Many of the presentations and submissions heard and received by the Committee on the topic of fiscal policy and taxation echoes government's priorities to maintain balanced budgets and work towards reducing debt over time.

The Committee acknowledges the challenges that businesses could face in regards to the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) and asks that the provincial government consider a review of the tax policy and how the tax is implemented to ensure that any anomalies and implementation challenges that might exist are addressed. The Committee appreciated hearing from a range of business-oriented organizations that represent small, independent and large-scale businesses during the consultation process and acknowledges that businesses are a major driver to ensuring the economic health of the province and continued growth.

As in the previous year, the Committee heard from a range of organizations and individuals who brought forward recommendations related to the Carbon Tax for the Committee's consideration. In keeping with the original intent of the Carbon Tax to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Committee recommends that government consider a plan to apply the carbon tax to measurable carbon emissions which are currently omitted from coverage.

A number of organizations representing regional and provincial credit unions brought forward a unified recommendation to the Committee asking that the temporary tax deferral be made permanent. The Committee acknowledges the value that credit unions bring to small businesses and individuals and their communities, and puts forward a recommendation to government in regards to

the credit unions' request. The Committee heard from a number of citizens and organizations that there should be an opportunity for government to examine the Property Transfer Tax and associated policy and legislation to ensure that the tax is functioning as intended and that there are no areas where loopholes might exist. The Committee heard from gaming facility operators who presented information to the Committee related to gaming revenues, as well as capital investment opportunities to support job growth and economic activity.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations
14. Remain committed to balanced budgets and continued debt reduction. **(2013: #1, #2 and 2014: #1, #2)**
15. Consider a plan to apply the carbon tax to measurable carbon emissions which are currently omitted from coverage. **(2014: #5)**
16. Make the temporary deferment of the preferential provincial tax rate for BC-based credit unions (and B.C.-based operations of national credit union organizations) permanent. **(2013: #9 and 2014: #7)**
17. Review the Property Transfer Tax to look for opportunities to assist first-time homebuyers. **(2013: #10 and 2014: #6)**
18. Take measures to mitigate the effects of property speculation on housing affordability. **(2014: #6)**
19. Review the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) to address any existing anomalies that relate to business capital investment. **(2013: #3 and 2014: #3)**
20. Work with Genome BC and the federal government to identify ways to leverage and attract funding from the private sector and international sources necessary to support a five-year genomics research and development program. **(2014: #53)**
21. Work with the life sciences and technology sectors and the federal government, through the Venture Capital Action Plan and other mechanisms, to create a pool of venture capital that can leverage additional private sector capital for early stage companies. **(2014: #52)**

Health

Health sector professional associations, community service providers, healthy living advocacy groups and interested citizens made submissions before the Committee on health-related topics this year. Presenters described health care service challenges facing individual communities and regions around the province in terms of capital and operational funding, and brought forward a range of resourcing requests to address specific health issues.

As has been the case in recent years, the Committee heard a number of presentations highlighting an important role for preventative measures in addressing population health issues, from mental health and addictions services, to children and youth mental health, to childhood obesity and improving access to the HPV vaccine. Several presentations addressed Medical Service Plan (MSP) affordability, and an important role for education — both for the public and for professionals — was brought to the Committee's attention repeatedly as a key indicator for success in early assessment and treatment related to health concerns.

Hospice and Bereavement Programs

Committee Members heard presentations on behalf of numerous hospice societies regarding provincial funding support for hospice care and bereavement services, as well as the challenges faced by British Columbians as they near the end of life or provide care for others approaching end of life.

The Castlegar Hospice Society reminded Committee Members that only 16 percent to 30 percent of Canadians have access to tertiary or hospice palliative services, with limited availability in many regions. Further, the Committee heard, each death has serious impact on at least five people, many of whom could benefit greatly from increased availability of bereavement services. Because hospice beds cost approximately $300 per day, and acute care beds closer to $1000 per day, Committee Members heard, support for hospice palliative services should provide savings to the health care system.

The Fraser Health Region Hospice Advisory Committee (HAC) presented in Richmond on behalf of 11 region hospice societies. In its presentation to the Committee, HAC presented its case for two-year pilot funding for hospice societies' bereavement services, as an effective means to support the Province's goal to invest in palliative care and hospice services. The HAC highlighted for Committee Members the multiple ways such an investment can be leveraged by hospice societies in supporting the training of volunteers, increasing outreach to vulnerable groups, providing supports for clinical staff, and reducing the burden on stretched provincial health care system resources.

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

The Committee heard support from a number of organizations for the Province's human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program as an effective means to reduce incidence of certain cancers, including a growing number of oral cancers of the throat and tongue. Presentations addressing HPV vaccination programs by the Living Positive Resource Centre and the YouthCo HIV and Hep C Society were united in recommending that the program, currently aimed at young women and 'at-risk' men, be extended to include all young people. Merck Canada also voiced support for an expanded HPV vaccination program, pointing out that comprehensive vaccination programs support health care budget sustainability through prevention of future costs. Providing universal HPV vaccination for school-age boys and girls is current policy in Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Nova Scotia, and consistent with 2015 recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Cost for the requested expansion of the provincial HPV vaccination program is estimated at $4 million.

Medical Services Plan

The Committee heard requests for a review of Medical Services Plan premiums from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) during its presentation at the Surrey public hearing, with several individuals' written submissions echoing a similar sentiment. While recognizing the revenue-generating importance of MSP premiums, the CTF pointed out that increasing rates have proven onerous for some families and seniors, and for businesses who pay through payroll contributions.

In terms of topics for review, submissions addressed equitability of rates for individuals and families, and creation of a designated health care fund where MSP premiums could be held. From a service providers' perspective, Walk-in Clinics of BC requested increased flexibility in the MSP cap on the number of patients seen daily by MSP general practitioners.

Mental Health and Addiction Services

The Committee heard about the importance of funding to bolster mental health and addictions services from a range of service providers and advocacy organizations. The British Columbia Schizophrenia Society outlined their concerns about mental health care in the province, with high costs, delayed treatment and inadequate supports leading into substance abuse, homelessness, and crises requiring law enforcement and acute care intervention. The Canadian Mental Health Association emphasized the need for a balanced approach, incorporating community-based and acute care mental health supports and services, and suggested that investments in mental health acute care be matched by investments in community care.

Organizations including the B.C. Schizophrenia Society, the Prince George Mental Health Consumer Council, and the Vanderhoof MenShed Society made recommendations around program-

and area-specific funding, following a theme of resourcing improved and expanded access to mental health and addictions services in the province, including additional community care options, as well as providing dedicated initiatives for early intervention and prevention.

Mental Health Services – Children and Youth

Several organizations focused comments to the Committee on an important role for early intervention in a healthy living strategy to ensure timely and coordinated mental health services and supports for children and youth in the province. The Canadian Mental Health Association emphasized that availability of services and programs for children and youth facilitates early identification of mental health issues, providing young people with the supports required to complete their education and ensure full participation in their communities. The British Columbia Healthy Living Alliance recommended doubling the funding for promotion of health and prevention of disease, ensuring disadvantaged youths, as well as other demographics, enjoy every opportunity to succeed.

Taxation on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Childhood obesity is a public health concern to British Columbians, and evidence suggests that overconsumption of sugar-sweetened beverages plays a significant role in increasing rates of childhood obesity. The Committee heard a range of perspectives from public health advocacy groups and industry associations on an appropriate role for government in respect to discouraging overconsumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

The Childhood Obesity Foundation and the Canadian Diabetes Association voiced support for implementation of a volume-based tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, and suggested that revenue from such a tax be reinvested in initiatives to promote the health of British Columbians.

In contrast, the Western Convenience Store Association points to its active role in testing approaches to encourage consumers to opt for healthier product selections through education, and suggests that increased taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages would penalize retailers and encourage a grey-market economy in such products, potentially creating public health risks. The Canadian Beverage Association highlights British Columbia's recent ranking as the healthiest province in Canada, and gestures toward mounting financial stressors having an impact on the beverage industry. Both industry associations emphasize an education- rather than taxation-based approach to encouraging healthy beverage choices. In its presentation before the Committee in Vancouver, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation recommended against food and drink taxes.

Training for Health Care Professionals

The Committee heard from several associations representing health professionals regarding population health and health care service disparities between urban and rural areas of the province, and about the proven effectiveness of interdisciplinary teams in providing cost-effective, comprehensive health care services for British Columbians.

In Vancouver, the British Columbia Association of Kinesiologists described for Committee Members its important role in primary and community care, supporting diverse needs of groups including our province's aging population, and working effectively in interdisciplinary teams to support population health and offset acute care costs. During a public hearing presentation in Richmond, the British Columbia Chiropractic Association emphasized an important role for their profession in an interdisciplinary, team-based approach to health care, and recommended increased integration of chiropractic care in a collaborative care model to increase efficiency of service delivery for patients.

Physiotherapists for Northern Communities highlighted a role for physiotherapists in improving health outcomes as part of an interdisciplinary health team, but noted challenges to recruitment and retention in rural and remote areas across the province. Physiotherapists for Northern Communities requested funding for 20 physiotherapy seats, to be placed in the north at UNBC.

Conclusions

Committee Members were pleased to hear perspectives on health care in our province from diverse service providers, health sector and industry advocacy groups, and interested British Columbians. Committee Members are unanimous in their intention to reflect broadly the information collected during the consultation period, during presentations at public hearings and in the support materials provided by presenters, and in written submissions.

The Committee heard about the important work hospices perform in British Columbia, and about increasing demographic-driven demand for end-of-life services for patients and caregivers. In terms of the cost-benefit ratio, presenters pointed out that funding for hospice care and bereavement programming alleviates cost pressures at other points in B.C.'s health care system.

Members learned that B.C.'s school-based human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program protects many young people from certain cancers, and heard recommendations to extend the program to encompass all youth in the province.

On mental health and addictions services, presenters observed areas for improvement in terms of the suite of available services and equitable access to such services across the province. With demand for preventative supports and early intervention highlighted, Committee Members felt it important to emphasize particular opportunities to bolster children and youth mental health.

Presenters' varied comments on the Province's Medical Services Plan drew Committee Members to conclude that a broad review of the plan would be timely. Similarly, Members felt that differing perspectives on an appropriate government public health response to the potential health concerns associated with sugar-sweetened beverages warrants further investigation.

A variety of professional organizations that represent non-physician health care practitioners, including physiotherapists, kinesiologists, chiropractors and nurse practitioners, presented to the Committee and outlined the benefits of non-medical health care services. In some cases, provision of these services can work proactively to help British Columbians alleviate or lessen ongoing health concerns and prevent more serious impacts on their health and ultimately, on the health care system.

Committee Members heard about limited access to health services in rural and remote areas of the province, and received recommendations for an increased role for integrated, interdisciplinary teams in providing a continuum of health care services across the province — from health promotion and disease prevention, through to acute care. The Committee recognizes an opportunity to improve access to services and to support an interdisciplinary service delivery approach through exploring professional development and training opportunities for health care professionals, and providing incentives for them to practice in rural and remote areas of British Columbia.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations

22. Expand support and funding for a broad range of hospice care and bereavement programs to ensure that these services are available to British Columbians and their families. **(2013: #46)**
23. Expand the current Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine school-based program to include equal protection for all boys and young men.
24. Conduct a broad review of the Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums, including threshold levels, comparisons to other jurisdictions, costs of administering the program, and alternatives.
25. Improve and expand access to mental health and addictions services, including better coordination of services and dedicated initiatives for early intervention and prevention. **(2013: #45)**
26. Ensure that a coordinated, effective and responsive system is in place for children and youth who face mental health challenges, including early intervention strategies. **(2014: #17)**
27. Explore the implementation of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages to counteract potential health concerns associated with the consumption of these beverages, including obesity and diabetes, and ensure that any resulting revenues are directed to help support and promote healthy living. **(2013: #50 and 2014: #19)**

28. Review the cost-effectiveness and efficacy of providing coverage of non-physician health services and greater utilization of nurse practitioners.
29. Take additional measures to train and recruit health care professionals and develop incentives for them to remain in or locate to rural and remote communities.[3] **(2013: #42 and 2014: #15)**

[3] This recommendation also relates to the Advanced Education topic in this report.

Environment

Throughout the consultation period numerous propositions were made, from organizations and individuals presenting to the Committee, about the importance of protecting and preserving the environment. Parks management also emerged as a predominant area of focus.

Suggestions for ways of bolstering provincial capabilities to attract additional tourism were made, along with ideas of encouraging the development of new and innovative clean energy initiatives. Submissions that detailed improvements for invasive species management were also heard, with practical policy suggestions presented for consideration.

BC Parks

Almost all of the feedback received with BC Parks as a focus were made in the form of written submissions to the Committee. Almost two thirds of submissions were from organizations, representing geographical regions spread across the province. The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORCBC), who represent the interests of the public outdoor recreation community, working on behalf of around 40 provincial member groups and representing over 100,000 individuals requested a review of the accounting methods used by BC Parks so that the public can more easily understand funding allotments. The ORCBC's submission suggested that the current funding level of BC Parks' operating expenses is inadequate, an opinion prominent within the majority of the respondents who commented on this topic.

Over half of the written submissions on parks agreed with the ORCBC, asking for more resources to be put into preserving BC Parks and protected areas, with calls for significantly increased funding to support both parks management and maintenance. Many of these individuals and organizations also placed a spotlight on the need for additional park rangers, highlighting situations where tourism opportunities have been negatively impacted or underutilized, due to the lack of support, care and promotion of British Columbia's parks.

Clean Energy

There were a wide variety of suggestions received by the Committee to encourage the expansion of energy options, biodiversity preservation initiatives, and provincial environmental conservation programs. The Western Silvicultural Contractors' Association, an organization dedicated to improving standards in forestry and ecosystem management, called for additional support to develop and improve clean energy initiatives and improve forest ecosystems, such as the BC Bioenergy Network. Altentech Power and associates also requested the re-capitalization of the BC Bioenergy Network, and requested that government ensure that plans are in place to ensure B.C. industries are equipped to react to future demands for clean energy.

Environmental organizations such as the David Suzuki Foundation expressed concern that the climate leadership shown in B.C. requires reinvigoration and suggested this area needs modernizing to achieve legislated goals for greenhouse gas reduction. They were supportive of efforts to strengthen climate action initiatives and asked for an expansion of the carbon neutral capital program funding, to match the original Public Sector Energy Conservation Agreement.

In Surrey, the Committee heard from Innergex, a renewable energy producer, who suggested several clean energy proposals for consideration. One suggestion was for a Strategic Infrastructure Fund to be established to encourage the use of clean and renewable energy, which also received additional support from other clean energy organizations and concerned individuals. Another idea expressed in multiple submissions, including Clean Energy Association of BC's, was to provide additional support for emerging businesses competing in the growing market for clean energy technologies.

Environmental Protection and Policy

Many individuals wrote to the Committee with their concerns and suggestions centered on the importance of our environmental policies in light of climate change issues and emerging research. Individuals and organizations reiterated the importance of taking a responsible approach to budget development and prioritizing investment, not just for specific environmental issues, but for policies that can have an indirect effect on the environment, such as housing, natural resource and fiscal policy development.

The importance of protecting our food and fresh water production, investing in green technology, minimizing the impacts of climate change and providing better environmental regulation were common themes throughout many submissions received.

Invasive Species and Plants

Numerous organizations from across the province submitted written submissions and presented to the Committee on the importance of preventing and managing invasive species in B.C. There was a consensus within all of these submissions for the government to ensure sufficient funding for reducing the major economic and environmental damage caused by invasive species.

In Kamloops, the Committee heard from the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia (ISCBC) regarding the damaging impact that invasive species are having on the provincial economy. They quoted recent studies that show the negative impact on B.C. fisheries, agriculture and forestry. ISCBC noted that there is an urgent need for an increased understanding and improved operational practices to prevent invasive species entering, becoming established in, and spreading across, the province.

Submissions focused on the need to streamline and enforce government regulations, including a suggestion from the ISCBC to create an Invasive Species Act. They suggested this should be supported by enforcing relevant regulations to ensure better management of B.C.'s Crown land.

The Coastal Invasive Species Committee also suggested that it was timely to update legislation — specifically the *Weed Control Act*. This registered charity represents diverse stakeholders throughout Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and the Sunshine Coast, encompassing nine Regional Districts, 37 Municipalities, 15 Gulf Islands and 57 First Nation Groups. In their presentation to the Committee, they stressed the importance of prohibiting the sale of invasive species and plants for protecting our provincial biodiversity and requested that funding be increased to tackle this escalating problem.

Conclusions

The Committee agreed with the need for increased funding for BC Parks, recognizing the potential for this sector to increase revenue and attract tourism along with its associated longer term socio-economic benefits for the province. Recommendations were made to boost investment for this sector, including the allocation of additional funds to be invested into the management and maintenance of the province's protected areas. A specific consideration that the Committee endorsed was the need to provide additional park rangers to ensure the responsible stewardship of our provincial parks.

Clean energy initiatives was another key area that the Committee was keen to support. Aligning with the 2014 recommendations on this topic, the Committee requests government seriously contemplate the development and implementation of a clean energy and energy conservation strategy.

Ecosystem and biodiversity restoration programs were another area in which the Committee expressed particular interest.

The Committee recognized the integral part that funding for effective intervention can have on the management of invasive species, adding that consideration be given to updating legislation, where applicable, in order to prohibit the sale of invasive species and plants in B.C.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations
30. Increase funding for BC Parks and protected areas management, maintenance and provide more park rangers.
31. Provide strategic supports and investment for the further development of clean and renewable energy technologies, low carbon infrastructure and ecosystem and biodiversity restoration.
32. Embrace a clean energy and energy conservation strategy and build upon the success of the clean energy sector and programs (e.g. LiveSmart BC and Innovative Clean Energy Fund) to enable B.C. economic development, with prominent participation by First Nations. (**2013: #64 and 2014: #54**)
33. Ensure sufficient funding for the proactive prevention and management of invasive species and noxious weeds and update existing legislation, where applicable, to prohibit the sale of invasive species and plants. (**2013: #63 and 2014: #57**)

Social Services

As in previous years, the Committee received considerable input from a range of organizations and individuals, including non-profit groups, service providers, advocacy groups and community organizations on the topic of social services. This topic is a complex one with many inter-related aspects that affect British Columbians including: poverty reduction for families and individuals, affordable housing, domestic violence, aging populations, the provision of social assistance and support for persons with disabilities.

The Committee heard a number of recommendations to improve social services, provide support for seniors, address homelessness, ensure access to services and supports for those affected by domestic violence, reduce poverty and provide affordable childcare options for families. Presenters highlighted the need for better coordination among service providers and ministry support services to ensure effective and efficient service delivery to ministry clients.

Affordable Childcare

The need for affordable childcare was highlighted by many organizations that presented to the Committee and is something that has gained national interest as families across the province and the country struggle to ensure they have options available to them for childcare while parents are at work. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC presented to the Committee and outlined their recommendation in support of an affordable childcare plan and suggested that the province put childcare at the top of the agenda in discussions with the federal government.

The Committee heard from a number of presenters who underlined their belief that access to affordable childcare is an important aspect of support for working families, along with affordable housing and a proposed increase to the minimum wage.

Affordable Housing

In-person presentations and written submissions received by the Committee highlighted the need for improvements to invest in subsidized housing and also to look at ways to address the high cost of market rental housing to help individuals and families struggling to maintain or acquire safe and affordable housing. Homelessness is a topic that was brought forward by many presenters as a complex issue to be addressed through a variety of approaches including strategic partnerships between municipal, provincial and federal governments to support and increase the existing stock of affordable housing units, including co-op housing and social housing.

The Committee heard from a variety of organizations that represent different areas of focus related to homelessness and affordable housing, including the Co-operative Housing Federation of B.C., the

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, BC Non-Profit Housing Association and the Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC. It was suggested that government work cooperatively alongside municipalities and with the federal government to gather research and data to better understand the housing affordability issue, homelessness and their socioeconomic impacts so as to provide a more holistic approach to working to resolve this issue.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is an issue that affects British Columbians regardless of gender, education or social or economic standing. Domestic violence, also referred to as family violence, spousal abuse, wife assault or intimate partner violence can have a devastating impact on children, families, their communities and all of us. The Committee heard from organizations devoted to helping those affected by domestic violence and providing public education and awareness to try to prevent its occurrence, including the West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund.

It was recommended that ongoing, dedicated funding support be provided for organizations that provide services to those affected by domestic violence and their families, including transition houses, crisis centres and multicultural centres.

Income and Disability Assistance Rates and Support Services

Public hearing presentations and written submissions were received and heard by the Committee from a variety of stakeholders who asked for a review of the current income assistance rates in relation to the cost of living in British Columbia and in particular, the cost of housing and rental accommodations, to help reduce poverty among some of our most vulnerable citizens. Many groups asked that the Committee consider a review of income and persons with a disability assistance rates in tandem and look for ways to ensure that service delivery models, such as via telephone or online, be examined to ensure that clients are able to access them in a timely and efficient manner.

The Committee heard recommendations from a variety of organizations who advocate on behalf of British Columbians with disabilities, and one of the primary areas of focus that was underlined for Committee members is the current monthly disability assistance rate. It was recommended that the current rate of $906 per month be raised to better reflect the cost of living in B.C. and the cost of rental accommodations and housing in the province. The need for better coordination of social services and resources provided through a variety of service delivery models was also highlighted for Committee members.

Submissions were received by the Committee from several organizations that support ways to address the issues that contribute to the increased complexity and volume of people requiring social services, including: Federation of Community Social Services of B.C., Nelson CARES Society, Advocacy

Centre, and Inclusion BC. The British Columbia Dental Association recommended that the Committee consider ways to improve dental care for clients of the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, including preventative care and dental health education through increased funding.

Poverty Reduction

The impact of poverty on British Columbians was highlighted for the Committee through a number of written submissions and oral presentations by advocacy groups, community service providers and interested individuals. Poverty has been identified as a root cause for many social and economic problems that realize negative outcomes in terms of increased health care costs, increased policing costs, lost productivity and the opportunity cost related to economic activity. With poverty identified as an issue with a multitude of related factors, it was suggested that a multi-pronged approach or plan, with legislated targets and timelines to address poverty be developed. It was suggested that the plan could encompass aspects such as affordable housing and childcare, minimum wage increases, coordination of services and supports, as well as enhancements to income assistance and persons with a disability rates.

Recommendations were put forth by a variety of organizations and individuals related to the issue of poverty, including those with a focus on child poverty, including: BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Summerland Food Bank and Resource Centre and Abbotsford Community Services.

Seniors Housing

The needs of seniors in relation to housing, as well as services and supports, were outlined for the Committee through the submissions and presentations from various organizations, including Save Our Northern Seniors and the Office of the Seniors Advocate.

Seniors care facilities, including those with multiple tiers of support that allow seniors to live independently with some assistance, was highlighted as a housing model that gives senior British Columbians the opportunity to live with a sense of dignity and inclusion in their communities, while ensuring appropriate support and care when required. Many seniors would like to remain independent and stay in their own homes for as long as possible and options to provide assistance to seniors to enable them to support ongoing maintenance on their homes was discussed. The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) grant was highlighted as a program that is beneficial to seniors and is something that many stakeholders would like to see expanded and potentially recalibrated to reflect market rents and the cost of inflation.

Conclusions

The number of oral presentations and written submissions that the Committee received that relate to social services indicate that this is an area of priority for many British Columbians and organizations. Accordingly, the Committee makes several recommendations to examine and provide support for the programs and services delivered through government and accredited agencies. The impact of poverty on British Columbians was a theme that the Committee heard this year that was reiterated from consultations held in previous years. Many organizations and individuals urged the Committee to recommend that government examine the current income assistance and disability assistance rates in relation to the cost of living in B.C. and the cost of housing. Suggestions were made to look at ways to better coordinate programs and services and ensure that access to these supports are easily available through a variety of service delivery models.

Ensuring appropriate housing and support for elderly British Columbians is another area of interest for the Committee and their recommendations below are reflective of this.

The Committee believes in providing appropriate supports and services to vulnerable British Columbians, families and children, and those most in need. The opportunity to look at poverty and homelessness from a holistic level and examine the root causes and impacts from social and economic perspectives is something of great interest to the Committee. Examination of these issues requires data and information to fully comprehend the intricacies of the issues and work in partnership with municipalities and other levels of government to provide solutions.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations

34. Provide funding and support for the development and implementation of an affordable childcare plan. **(2013: #57 and 2014: #40)**
35. Work alongside municipalities and the federal government to invest directly in public housing and to gather research and data to better understand the housing affordability issue and its socioeconomic impacts. **(2013: #60 and 2014: #41)**
36. Examine opportunities to support and increase the existing stock of affordable housing, including social housing and co-ops.
37. Encourage provincial leadership through a cross-ministerial initiative to bring together various ministries and B.C. Housing to identify and address the funding gaps within the current homelessness intervention landscape.
38. Increase funding for transition houses, crisis centres and multicultural centres that provide services to those who are affected by domestic violence and abuse. **(2013: #50)**
39. Review current income assistance and disability assistance (PWD) rates and consider increases to reflect the cost of living in B.C., including housing and rental accommodations. **(2013: #61 and 2014: #37, 38)**
40. Recommend that the Ministry of Health initiate discussions with the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation to improve dental care for ministry clients, including preventative care and dental health education.
41. Improve access to Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation services and resources by providing more in-person support to augment telephone and online service delivery models to ensure that those in need can gain timely and efficient access.
42. Explore the option to strike an all-party parliamentary committee to develop a comprehensive and integrated poverty reduction strategy, including legislated timelines and targets for the reduction of poverty (including child poverty) and homelessness in B.C. **(2013: #62 and 2014: #37)**
43. Adjust the SAFER grant formula to reflect CMHC average market rents to ensure equitability across B.C. and investigate opportunities to facilitate automatic enrollment for seniors who qualify for this program.
44. Explore the possibility of creating a homeowner expense deferral account to assist seniors with ongoing maintenance of their homes and to maintain residency in their homes.

Natural Resources

As in previous consultations, there was a continued interest surrounding possibilities for enhancing effective and sustained natural resource development. A common topic in submissions was the need to improve partnerships and relationships with First Nations groups, in order to streamline policy and approval processes, and to remove barriers to resource development. Presenters from various communities spoke about the importance of mining to the provincial economy, including many that elaborated on the potential economic benefits of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Several local Chamber of Commerce organizations also made submissions stressing the need for physical and social infrastructure to accommodate population growth in more rural or remote communities, to allow sufficient momentum for natural resource development in those areas.

The Committee also received submissions from representatives of forestry, agriculture and other sectors. Organic and local farming was a popular topic, with suggestions made concerning possible ways of improving marketing, policy and educational nutritional programs. Overall, the information presented to the Committee underscored the natural resource benefits underlying the economic success of the Province, as well as the additional leverage potential in this sector for government.

Agriculture and Aquaculture

The Committee received presentations on this topic by individuals and organizations representing farmers, ranchers, fruit growers, land-based salmon farmers, and farmers' markets.

A number of submissions focused on the need to increase strategic funding for the Province's 'Buy Local' and 'Beyond the Market' programs and looked at ways that local farmers can be supported, particularly in more rural and remote communities. Some also highlighted the need for improving the proactive enforcement of existing regulations to enforce the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in order to strengthen B.C.'s reputation as a source of safe, high-quality food. The BC Food Systems Network reinforced these recommendations by emphasizing the need to reinstate regional research and extension services, and support farmers who are involved in small-scale agriculture, organic production and urban agriculture.

B.C. has emerged as a leader in organic farming with the organic sector growing by 20 to 35 percent each year for the past decade, according to statistics from Agri-Food Canada. However, much of the organic food sold in B.C. stores is currently imported, mainly from the United States. Requests to support B.C. organic production and urban agriculture were prevalent within submissions received, with many submissions emphasizing the need to improve links with local, organic produce and improve the understanding of the origin of this food within our communities and schools.

The B.C. Fruit Growers Association presented to the Committee in Kamloops and suggested there is a need to reinvigorate the 'teaching moments' in relation to the school fruit and nutrition program. They asked for increased opportunities to incorporate local, organic produce while also facilitating additional understanding of these links for consumers. Other submissions reiterated this, asking for more resources to go into targeting and improving school meal and food literacy programs.

Several submissions focused in on the specific types of support currently offered to B.C. farmers as well as new farmers establishing themselves in the province. Looking specifically at initiatives for supporting land-raised salmon farming, Kuterra presented to the Committee in Nanaimo. They outlined the progress made for hormone, antibiotic and pesticide-free salmon farming and made suggestions for how the government can support environmental, land-based salmon farming practices. Among their suggestions was a proposal that government introduce a 'polluter pays' fee for those who discharge waste directly into the marine environment and a suggestion to also look at ways to give additional financial assistance to encourage growth in Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) farming and research.

Forestry

A number of presentations were made to the Committee regarding forestry and land-use planning. These included suggestions surrounding regulatory and pricing frameworks, access to international markets and information sharing practices.

The Private Forest Landowners Association (PFLA), a non-profit organization representing managed forest owners across the province, presented in Nanaimo. They illustrated a number of opportunities for government to encourage the responsible stewardship of private forest lands. The PFLA recommended focusing efforts and funding on generating and maintaining a competitive, stable operating climate. They proposed this could be facilitated with the creation of a competitive regulatory framework, in order to provide certainty for B.C. producers who are competing with foreign jurisdictions.

Other organizations also stressed the importance of allocating additional resources to sustainable and responsible timber-harvesting opportunities within the province. A leading manufacturer of a wide range of forest products for customers around the world, Tolko Industries Ltd., presented to the Committee by teleconference in Williams Lake. They identified a number of possibilities for encouraging environmentally responsible, sustainable and competitive forestry practices. In addition, they detailed a number of suggestions to improve the integrity of the market-based timber pricing system. Another key point brought to the Committee was the importance of providing resources to prepare for the extension and renegotiation of the Softwood Lumber Agreement.

BC Wood Specialties Group, a not-for-profit trade association that represents B.C.'s value-added wood products industry, presented to the Committee in Surrey. On the topic of information sharing and improving good practice, they focused on the importance of providing relevant marketing, networking and business development services for the industry. A dominant suggestion was to explore the development of a single point of contact between government and the value-added sector.

Mining

British Columbia's mineral exploration and mining industry is an integral part of the provincial economy. According to 2013 data, the mining industry directly employs over 10,000 people and is the largest private sector employer of First Nations workers. A consistent message was presented across multiple submissions that recognized the importance of mining and mineral exploration programs and asked that government work with key representatives and industry to develop improved regulations and guidelines to ensure safe and environmentally sound mining practices.

A number of submissions focused on the need to allocate adequate resources to ensure timely processing of all mining permits. The Mining Association of BC presented a written submission to the Committee reiterating the importance of focusing on policies and programs that reduce costs and provide certainty to the mining sector. Another focused request emerged from the Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce's presentation to the Committee stating the need for expedited permits and approvals for two mining companies and employers in order to ensure continued production and allow for employee job retention. The important link between the timely issuing of mining permits with allowing sustained community and economic prosperity was highlighted in a number of submissions.

Resource Communities

Throughout the consultation process, the Committee heard requests from various individuals and organizations with respect to improving infrastructure to ensure effective and responsible resource development and maximize provincial growth. A common theme that emerged was the need for municipal government to collaborate with key partners, industry and First Nations in order to improve services and infrastructure, particularly with respect to the shipping and transportation industries, and especially in rural or isolated areas of the province.

Relationship building with First Nations was a consistent focus that came through the submissions on natural resource policy development and was mentioned within suggestions to the Committee from across all regions of the province. The importance of effective partnerships on the development of a long-term infrastructure plan for the province was highlighted by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of B.C. (ACEC-BC). In Kamloops, the Committee heard from officials from the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, who suggested a clear consultation, permitting and

approval process should be developed to enable essential and timely government decisions to strengthen the natural resource sector. They highlighted the lack of current export infrastructure, giving as an example the current lack of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export facility and oil pipelines and limited opportunities to export to Asian markets.

In Richmond, representatives from the Northeast Resource Municipalities Coalition, whose members include seven northern B.C. municipalities, talked to the Committee about the importance of recognizing the rapid growth of the Northeast region. The LNG export terminal proposals, hydro and wind energy sites, logging, wood products manufacturing and agriculture are all important growth industries for this geographical area. Representatives from this coalition pointed out the importance of adequately supporting these significant areas of growth, increasing infrastructure and providing community services as top priorities to enable the increase of successful industrial activity.

Conclusions

The Committee received multiple submissions emphasizing the significance that investment into natural resource development allows for the sustained economic health of the province. In appreciation of these important linkages, the Committee makes a number of recommendations intended to bolster growth in this sector.

Regarding agricultural initiatives, the Committee recommends the provision of strategic investment to allow for expansion of the Province's 'Buy Local' program. A recommendation to partner with agriculture industry stakeholders to develop and implement a small grant program for farmers' markets in rural and remote communities was also agreed upon by the Committee. Other local initiatives included for this sector was the Committee's recommendation to provide expanded food programs for vulnerable populations. The Committee suggested that this could be improved by supporting school meal programs and school gardens, as well as school and community food literacy programs, in order to promote opportunities for strengthening direct linkages to local producers.

Besides local agricultural incentives, the Committee also recommended support be given to new entrepreneurs who are pioneering Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) facilities throughout the province, though incentives such as targeted investment tax credits.

Details were presented to the Committee surrounding the need to expand creative supports for the forest industry. These considerations are reflected in the Committee's recommendation to develop strategies to sustain the B.C. forest industry and primary manufacturing facilities through the mid term. The Committee also specifically recommended ensuring adequate funding is provided to update inventories for forestry investments, while ensuring biodiversity and forest health is maintained.

The Committee considered a range of submissions surrounding suggestions regarding facilitation of long-term mining and mineral exploitation opportunities in the province. They restated their 2013 recommendations that government maintain mining and mineral tax credits for this sector, giving support to improved collaborative efforts between municipal and federal government and allowing for the development of policies to enhance provincial competitive capacity in this area.

To facilitate natural resource development opportunities, the Committee recommends adequate resources be allocated to allow for stakeholder engagement in resource municipalities and rural areas. The Committee recommends ongoing, coordinated planning with industry, First Nations and municipal government and all other stakeholders in order to expand and improve the capacity of services and infrastructure in these areas.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations

45. Provide strategic investment and expansion of the Province's "Buy Local" program and partner with industry stakeholders to develop implementation of a small grant program for farmer's markets in rural and remote communities. **(2013: #21 and 2014: #12)**
46. Provide expanded programs for vulnerable populations and support school meal programs, school gardens, and food literacy programs in the classroom and other community settings that promote opportunities to create direct linkages to local producers.
47. Provide support for new entrepreneurs who are pioneering Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) facilities in the province through incentives, such as investment tax credits.
48. Develop strategies to sustain forest health, the B.C. forest industry, and primary manufacturing facilities through the mid-term. **(2014: #11)**
49. Provide adequate funding to update timber, flora and fauna inventories for forestry investments and to restore and maintain biodiversity and forest ecosystem health.
50. Maintain tax credits for the mining industry and mineral exploration and collaborate with municipal, and federal counterparts to encourage policies that enhance B.C.'s competitive edge. **(2013: #8)**
51. Work with all relevant stakeholders to develop regulation and guidelines to ensure safe and environmentally sound mining practices.
52. Engage in ongoing, coordinated planning with industry, First Nations and municipal government and all other stakeholders to expand and improve the capacity of services and infrastructure in resource municipalities and rural areas.

Sport, Culture and Arts

The wide range of sport, culture and arts services and programs across the province is reflected in the diversity of submissions received under this theme. The 20-plus submissions received on this area covered a multitude of topics, including fine arts support, infrastructure, music and video, sports and recreational interests. The importance of providing rich and varied opportunities in this sector and the potential for attracting immediate and longer term investment in the province are emphasized in the bulk of the submissions received. The Committee recognizes the significant economic and social benefits that sport, culture and the arts bring to communities across British Columbia.

Across the province, submissions were received that focused on the relevance of provincial grants support for this sector. Recognizing the importance of continued grants for underpinning sustainable communities, along with associated interconnected economic benefits was a key theme that prevailed throughout the majority of these submissions.

Arts Funding and Support

Arts and culture programs educate and inspire in a variety of ways, enhancing quality of life and providing vibrancy to communities across the province. The Committee received numerous submissions outlining the importance of this sector and its role in attracting new residents and leveraging investment in the B.C. economy.

Government invests over $60 million each year on artists and arts and culture organizations through a variety of grant programs and initiatives. Several key organizations that promote arts and culture enterprises across the province submitted requests communicating the value that increased investment for the arts would bring to the province. The BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, representing organizations, professional associations, not-for-profit groups, artists and cultural workers throughout B.C., presented to the Committee in Vancouver. Their presentation endorsed a request for the grant budget of BC Arts Council to be increased to $32 million, with a longer-term planned increase to $40 million, stating this would allow existing demand for programs to be addresses while activating associated economic and social benefits. The potential for making B.C. more competitive for this sector, within a national context, was also emphasized.

Other organizations and individuals also commented on the value associated with investing in an arts and culture facilities infrastructure program. A significant number of the submissions urged multiple-year funding be allocated to arts, culture and heritage, with distinct consideration given to expanding the Community Gaming Grant levels and providing incremental increases as gaming funds increase. The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria presented to the Committee in Victoria, outlining the specific need for funding contributions for the modernization and restoration of its facility and buildings.

Music Canada submitted a written report to the Committee detailing the currently underutilized potential to encourage music tourism and additional foreign investment. They outlined the opportunities for B.C., showing ways that improved policy and grants programs could ignite B.C.'s music economy and enable associated economic benefits.

Public Libraries

B.C.'s 71 public libraries host almost 58 million visits to libraries and their websites every year, with 3,400 computers available for public use. Written submissions to the Committee were received from libraries in three main geographical areas of the province: Vancouver, Prince George and Lillooet.

All submissions detailed the benefits of restoring the separate library line item in the forthcoming budget, in order to provide a transparent accounting of library funding and to signal a public recognition of the unique role public libraries play in the province. Consensus in all submissions sought additional investment in this area, with a call to demonstrate a commitment to stable, ongoing funding for B.C. libraries.

The Vancouver Public Library elaborated on their suggestions with a proposition for the Committee to expand the provision of publicly-funded library services for First Nations communities, instead of having to rely on the services available through non-charitable public library services.

Sports

The Committee heard from organizations representing Aboriginal sports and recreation, amateur-level, adaptive sports interests and golf. Submissions emphasized the strengths that sport, recreation and physical activity bring to community development and preventative health.

The Aboriginal Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Partners Council illustrated the positive impact that investments had made for Aboriginal sport, specifically in advancing the objectives laid out in the Aboriginal Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Strategy. Since 2011, 11 new provincial programs have been set up, 1,465 events have been held, and almost 50,000 participants have been involved in activities relating to this initiative. They asked for continued support for this provincial strategy to enable extended engagement with First nations, Metis Chartered Communities, and Aboriginal Friendship Centres in the design and delivery of community based programs.

Golf BC presented to the Committee in Kamloops and discussed the benefits that increased funding in sports tourism could bring and the wider positive impact this could facilitate from an economic perspective.

Conclusions

The Committee acknowledges the significant social and economic benefits associated with the provision of a vibrant and dynamic arts, sports and cultural sector for the province. To reaffirm this importance, the Committee recommended increased investment in the arts, including dedicated multiple-year funding commitments to this sector. More specifically, the Committee recommended the grant budget of the BC Arts Council be increased, and recommended investment in a distinct cultural facilities capital infrastructure program.

Elaborating on the idea of incentives to enable the sustained growth of this sector, the Committee also suggests government consider restoring Community Gaming Grant levels to the amounts that were provided in 2008, as well as planning for incremental increases, in line with any future increases in gaming funds.

After reviewing the submissions from key library representatives across the province, the Committee recommended ongoing stable and consistent funding for public libraries, requesting that government restore the separate public services library line item in the coming budget. In keeping with this focus, the Committee suggested that the specific library needs of First Nations communities on reserve be explored, including looking at increasing capacity for the provision of books by mail and bookmobile options.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations
53. Increase investment in the arts, including multiple-year funding commitments to arts, culture and heritage funding, increase the grant budget of the BC Arts Council and invest in a cultural facilities capital infrastructure program. **(2013: #51 and 2014: #47)**
54. Restore Community Gaming Grants levels to 2008 levels and provide incremental increases as gaming funds increase. **(2013: #52 and 2014: #47)**
55. Commit to stable, ongoing funding for B.C. public libraries and restore the separate public library services line item in the budget to provide transparent accounting of library funding. **(2013: #28)**
56. Explore the provision of publicly funded library services for First Nations communities on reserve, including books by mail and bookmobile services.

Transportation and Transit

Transportation and infrastructure received a high priority from feedback emerging from the public survey, with many respondents indicating a wish to see continued investment into roads, highways and bridges in the province. The improvement of vital infrastructure is a key goal included in a number of submissions to the Committee, with representatives from Chamber of Commerce organizations, Board of Trades and other organizations presenting on this topic.

The majority of submissions received by the Committee were from organizations operating within and individuals living in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, with a smaller number of submissions from the more northern, rural and Island communities across the province. The interconnectivity with transportation, natural resources, housing and economic development was also evident within many submissions.

BC Ferries

Representatives from organizations across both coastal and interior communities made submissions regarding BC Ferries, describing how their services provide an important and essential piece of provincial transportation infrastructure. Four submissions were received by the Committee with ferries featuring as a focal point, all of which detailed specific requests for additional subsidies for BC Ferries for minor routes. The Texada Island service and schedule was specifically mentioned, as were more northern services, such as the Discovery Coast ferry route.

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce substantiated the concern for the northern and minor routes of BC Ferries. They presented to the Committee in Victoria, stating that minor and northern routes are continuing to operate at a loss and are therefore in an untenable position, leaving the providers with little choice but to further increase fares, which will in turn discourage travel. They also recommended that the subsidy to northern and minor routes be increased, allowing more affordable ferry travel and ensuring a sustainable service for the future.

The written submission by the Islands Trust, which represents islands and waters between southern Vancouver Island and the mainland, demonstrated examples of the negative impact high ferry fares are having for residents and businesses. Islands Trust acknowledged the work that has been done to achieve the BC Ferries price cap for 2016 – 2020, though they stress fee reductions are essential in order to compensate for past increases that have driven down ridership. They suggested that a well-advertised drop in fares would attract more customers to the ferry system and bolster B.C.'s economy.

Cycling

Several submissions detailed the importance of promoting cycling, suggesting this is an area with huge potential to grow and thus provide B.C. communities with more affordable transportation choices and increased economic and health benefits for the province. The British Columbia Cycling Coalition (BCCC) presented to the Committee in Richmond with their suggestions for developing a comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy including infrastructure, Super Cycleways and electric bicycles. The BC Healthy Living Alliance (BCHLA) also supported the benefits to the province of creating a Provincial Active Transportation Strategy, giving examples of how this is already being developed in other provinces, including Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia.

The BCCC asserted that with sufficient investment and policy support, cycling and walking can become practical options for many more people, leading to significantly improved fitness, reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and traffic congestion and fatalities. They propose that with additional investment in this area, it will be possible to further increase tourism, reduce health care costs, increase workplace productivity, attract talented workers and reduce the societal costs of traffic fatalities and injuries. The BCCC report suggests that many people want to cycle more, with approximately 65 percent indicating they would ride more if there were separated bike lanes that protected cyclists from traffic.

Public Transit

Specific transit issues were highlighted during the consultation period, with the majority of the individuals and organizations vocalizing support for the importance of providing long-term, stable funding for critical and new public transit projects. Some individuals specifically asked for special lanes for mass transit vehicles to be incorporated into highway planning in the province. The Victoria-based Make Transit Work Coalition called for the removal of the three year limitations on funding for BC Transit, and also requested consideration be given to reviewing the BC Transit operating grant system. Other individuals suggested it would be good practice to be cautious in recommending any detailed alterations to revenue and funding for BC Transit until the results of the ongoing government audit is made public.

The need to address rapid transit investment requirements was highlighted in numerous submissions to the Committee. Many organizations and groups situated in the Lower Mainland focused on the importance of targeting development in advance of the plan to invest in rapid transit in Surrey and along the Broadway corridor.

Transportation, Transit and Infrastructure Funding

The Committee heard from a number of organizations throughout the duration of the consultation period that acknowledged the importance of continued and sustained investment in transportation

infrastructure across the province. Many organizations highlighted the interconnectivity of successful infrastructure and transit planning with sustained economic prosperity.

The Urban Development Institute (UDI), a national non-profit association representing land developers and related professions, presented a written submission to the Committee. They reiterated the importance of transportation and transit investments including links to housing affordability and economic prosperity. The UDI recommended prioritizing transit investment, especially in urban areas, while stressing the importance of effectively coordinating strategic planning initiatives. They recommended that transit infrastructure investments be coordinated with municipal and regional land use planning.

Presenters and submissions from across the province discussed the infrastructure deficits being faced by local municipalities. Specific infrastructure developments that were mentioned as requiring continued investment in the Lower Mainland included the Roberts Bank project, the George Massey Tunnel replacement and capacity research into additional Fraser River rail crossings. One submission was also made to the Committee requesting support for a feasibility study for a bridge link to replace the ferry system for Gabriola Island.

Further north in the province, several presenters discussed the importance of strengthening northwest gateway routes. The Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, who represent over 200 of the Northern Rockies Regional municipality's small and medium sized businesses, spoke to the Committee about the opportunities available to the Province with regards to the plans for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) expansion. They brought a number of suggestions to the Committee for supporting economic growth, including a request to prioritize funding to improve Highway 97 from Fort St John to Fort Nelson, a route that already requires essential maintenance and upgrades and, they said, is likely to see additional traffic pressures to coincide with the economic growth of this region.

The Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce also spoke to the Committee about the need to improve transportation infrastructure and sustaining natural resource opportunities in the northern communities such as the Cariboo. Among their suggestions was the request to construct an east-west connector road to bypass the centre of Quesnel, improving safety and enabling more effective transportation links for the region.

Conclusions

The Committee recognizes the importance of well-planned and supported transportation, transit and infrastructure projects which can have a positive effect on short- and long-term economic prospects. Acknowledging the challenges faced by island communities, the Committee recommends a review of ferry schedules and fares, to investigate opportunities for adjustments based on social and economic

impacts. On the topic of cycling, the Committee calls for government to invest in improvements to expand cycling infrastructure. This strategy is aimed at promoting healthy and sustainable transportation choices across the province, including support for improved levels of cycling safety awareness.

In keeping with the focus on expanding transportation options, the Committee presents a recommendation to commit to increased and consistent funding for public transit and transit infrastructure, and the improvement of services in urban and rural areas across the province.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations
57. Undertake a review of changes made to BC Ferries schedules and fares in 2014 to look for opportunities for adjustments based on social and economic impacts.
58. Invest in improvements to expand cycling infrastructure, promote cycling as an alternative transportation model and to increase cycling safety awareness and education among cyclists and drivers.
59. Commit to increased funding for public transit to provide improved services in urban centres and rural areas. **(2014: #51)**
60. Work to secure long-term, stable funding for transportation and transit infrastructure improvements. **(2014: #51)**

Public Safety

A smaller number of submissions were presented to the Committee this year focusing on public safety. Distinct suggestions were made surrounding policing and areas for additional training, focusing on early intervention and the need for local community courts.

Earthquake and emergency preparedness were also included as a distinct focus, with specific examples put forward to the Committee concerning how individuals and organizations could be better prepared to deal in the event of a natural disaster. Submissions on these topics highlighted mechanisms for improving resiliency, adaptability and confidence in public safety.

Alternative Justice and Legal Aid

The John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan (JHSCSO) presented to the Committee in Kelowna and put forward suggestions related to community courts and the provision of funds to support agencies that provide mental health and addiction services, services for seniors, legal support and advocacy. The JHSCSO is a social service organization based in Kelowna, with well-established professional working relationships with the criminal justice system, government and the not-for-profit sector.

JHSCO stressed the need for annual funding for local community courts with a focus on mental health services. With adequate planning and resources, they stated it would be possible to divert many people from the regular court system. JHSCO proposed that provision of funding for restorative justice models and improved access to legal aid or similar justice initiatives would be a cost-effective, efficient way to reduce the prison population and help people become productive and fully-engaged citizens in their communities.

Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

The Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) presented to the Committee in Richmond. They advocate on behalf of Canada's private property and casualty insurance companies. An integral part of their work involves engaging in coordinated preparation for, and response to, natural disasters. The IBC pointed out that one of the largest threats facing the insurance industry in B.C. is the potential impact of a major earthquake. IBC consumer awareness polls indicate that despite this very real threat, the majority of British Columbians do not believe that a major earthquake will hit the area in which they live in their lifetime and, further, these individuals overestimate their financial readiness for such an event.

The IBC drew attention to the need for increased investment in activities that promote awareness of earthquake and wildfire risk, and to ensure that individuals in these high risk areas are adequately

prepared for these eventualities. In addition, the IBC suggest an additional focus should be placed on improving wastewater and storm water infrastructure to improve resiliency to extreme weather conditions.

Policing

B.C. has diverse communities with their own individual needs for policing. A number of written submissions were made to the Committee from individuals and organizations, all requesting additional funding, but for very specific areas within the province.

The BC Cattlemen's Association stated there was a need for a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) livestock position and the City of Terrace called for an increased compliment of RCMP members and administrative positions across the northwest. The City of Terrace reported that there has been no increase in Provincial Policing Resources for the unincorporated areas serviced out of the Terrace RCMP detachment in over 30 years. They highlight the expected growth of the region over the next five to ten years due to the expansion of resource development, linking the essential need to support this growth and provide responsible policing resources for the area.

Conclusions

The Committee added their support to the request for providing funding for mental health courts and restorative justice models, and recognized the need for improved access to legal aid for all British Columbians. The Committee appreciated possibilities created by increased funding in this area to improve the cost effectiveness for early intervention strategies and the importance of equipping communities with more effective crime prevention techniques.

On the topic of emergency preparedness, the Committee unanimously agreed on the importance of maximizing and improving resiliency for climate-related extreme weather events, to help ensure British Columbians are prepared in the event of a natural disaster. The Committee advocated for the need to increase investment in activities that promote awareness of earthquake, flooding and wildfire risks in regions throughout the province. Incorporated in this recommendation was the focus on expanding initiatives that promote the adoption of FireSmart practices for vulnerable communities, as well as providing increased funding for waste and storm water infrastructure. The intention behind these recommendations is to improve the resiliency and preparedness in communities that may be at risk of such potentially devastating events.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Recommendations
61. Provide funding for mental health courts, alternative/restorative justice models, and expanded access to legal aid and to justice initiatives in communities. **(2013: #71 and 2014: #42)**
62. Increase investment in activities that help communities prepare for earthquake, flooding and wildfire risk, and promote the adoption of FireSmart practices in areas susceptible to wildfires. **(2013: #65)**
63. Provide increased funding for wastewater/storm water infrastructure to improve resiliency for extreme weather events associated with climate change. **(2013: #66)**

Summary of Recommendations

Topics within the report reflect the magnitude of recommendations received and are displayed from the most to the fewest, according to the overall number of submissions (including in-person presentations and written or video submissions) received related to a particular topic. Sub-topics within topics are organized alphabetically and the recommendation(s) for each topic are ordered to align with the alphabetical organization of the sub-themes. The order of recommendations in the report is not intended to suggest priority.

A number of recommendations included in this report are ones that the Committee wishes to reiterate from budget consultation reports that relate to the Budget 2014 and 2015 Consultation processes. References to recommendations from previous years' reports are noted in parentheses at the end of each recommendation, including year and recommendation number. Feedback and submissions received during this year's consultation process provided information that substantiates the reiteration of these recommendations as they address issues that remain on the minds of British Columbians.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recommends to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia that the provincial government:

K-12 Education

1. Provide adequate capital funding to school districts for facility improvements, seismic upgrades and additional schools in rapidly-growing communities. **(2013: #25 and 2014: #23)**
2. Provide stable, sustainable and adequate funding to enable school districts to fulfil their responsibility to continue to provide access to quality public education, with recognition of the increased costs that school districts have incurred. **(2014: #22)**
3. Review the Ministry of Education funding formula for programs and services, as well as administrative staff compensation levels to ensure adequate and competitive compensation.

Advanced Education

4. Restore full and sustained funding to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.[4] **(2013: #40 and 2014: #32)**
5. Provide funding support for capital projects related to infrastructure and equipment, such as building maintenance, renovations and projects related to seismic and efficiency upgrades. **(2013: #25 and 2014: #29)**
6. Recommit to the MOU signed with SFU and the Province on March 10, 2006 to double the size of SFU Surrey from 2,500 to 5,000 student FTEs by 2015. **(2013: #33)**

[4] This recommendation also relates to the K-12 Education topic in this report.

7. Address legislative, policy or other impediments that currently limit post-secondary institutions from financing self-supported capital projects. **(2013: #31 and 2014: #31)**
8. Undertake a comprehensive review of the post-secondary funding formula so that regional inequities and core funding for the system as a whole are adequately addressed. **(2013: #30 and 2014: #30)**
9. Provide support to enable more open source ancillary teaching materials and textbooks to be made available online to post-secondary research institutions, such as through the BC Open Textbook Program.
10. Provide multi-year annual funding of $2.5 million to continue coordinated community literacy work.[5] **(2013: #29 and 2014: #46)**
11. Increase operating grants to post-secondary institutions to address unfunded cost pressures and move to multi-year allotments for operating grants and deferred maintenance grants to help these institutions with their financial planning. **(2014: #27, #28)**
12. Commit to a multi-year investment plan to build capacity and meet demand for urgently-required skills training. **(2013: #34)**
13. Establish a student grant program that addresses student needs and provides incentives for completion and review the interest charged on B.C. student loans and review existing eligibility requirements for student loans. **(2013: #37, #38 and 2014: #34, #35)**

Fiscal Policy

14. Remain committed to balanced budgets and continued debt reduction. **(2013: #1, #2 and 2014: #1, #2)**
15. Consider a plan to apply the carbon tax to measurable carbon emissions which are currently omitted from coverage. **(2014: #5)**
16. Make the temporary deferment of the preferential provincial tax rate for BC-based credit unions (and B.C.-based operations of national credit union organizations) permanent. **(2013: #9 and 2014: #7)**
17. Review the Property Transfer Tax to look for opportunities to assist first-time homebuyers. **(2013: #10 and 2014: #6)**
18. Take measures to mitigate the effects of property speculation on housing affordability. **(2014: #6)**
19. Review the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) to address any existing anomalies that relate to business capital investment. **(2013: #3 and 2014: #3)**
20. Work with Genome BC and the federal government to identify ways to leverage and attract funding from the private sector and international sources necessary to support a five-year genomics research and development program. **(2014: #53)**

---

[5] This recommendation also relates to the K-12 Education topic in this report.

21. Work with the life sciences and technology sectors and the federal government, through the Venture Capital Action Plan and other mechanisms, to create a pool of venture capital that can leverage additional private sector capital for early stage companies. **(2014: #52)**

Health

22. Expand support and funding for a broad range of hospice care and bereavement programs to ensure that these services are available to British Columbians and their families. **(2013: #46)**
23. Expand the current Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine school-based program to include equal protection for all boys and young men.
24. Conduct a broad review of the Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums, including threshold levels, comparisons to other jurisdictions, costs of administering the program, and alternatives.
25. Improve and expand access to mental health and addictions services, including better coordination of services and dedicated initiatives for early intervention and prevention. **(2013: #45)**
26. Ensure that a coordinated, effective and responsive system is in place for children and youth who face mental health challenges, including early intervention strategies. **(2014: #17)**
27. Explore the implementation of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages to counteract potential health concerns associated with the consumption of these beverages, including obesity and diabetes, and ensure that any resulting revenues are directed to help support and promote healthy living. **(2013: #50 and 2014: #19)**
28. Review the cost-effectiveness and efficacy of providing coverage of non-physician health services and greater utilization of nurse practitioners.
29. Take additional measures to train and recruit health care professionals and develop incentives for them to remain in or locate to rural and remote communities.[6] **(2013: #42 and 2014: #15)**

Environment

30. Increase funding for BC Parks and protected areas management, maintenance and provide more park rangers.
31. Provide strategic supports and investment for the further development of clean and renewable energy technologies, low carbon infrastructure and ecosystem and biodiversity restoration.
32. Embrace a clean energy and energy conservation strategy and build upon the success of the clean energy sector and programs (e.g. LiveSmart BC and Innovative Clean Energy Fund) to enable B.C. economic development, with prominent participation by First Nations. **(2013: #64 and 2014: #54)**
33. Ensure sufficient funding for the proactive prevention and management of invasive species and noxious weeds and update existing legislation, where applicable, to prohibit the sale of invasive species and plants. **(2013: #63 and 2014: #57)**

---

[6] This recommendation also relates to the Advanced Education topic in this report.

Social Services

34. Provide funding and support for the development and implementation of an affordable childcare plan. **(2013: #57 and 2014: #40)**
35. Work alongside municipalities and the federal government to invest directly in public housing and to gather research and data to better understand the housing affordability issue and its socioeconomic impacts. **(2013: #60 and 2014: #41)**
36. Examine opportunities to support and increase the existing stock of affordable housing, including social housing and co-ops.
37. Encourage provincial leadership through a cross-ministerial initiative to bring together various ministries and B.C. Housing to identify and address the funding gaps within the current homelessness intervention landscape.
38. Increase funding for transition houses, crisis centres and multicultural centres that provide services to those who are affected by domestic violence and abuse. **(2013: #50)**
39. Review current income assistance and disability assistance (PWD) rates and consider increases to reflect the cost of living in B.C., including housing and rental accommodations. **(2013: #61 and 2014: #37, 38)**
40. Recommend that the Ministry of Health initiate discussions with the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation to improve dental care for ministry clients, including preventative care and dental health education.
41. Improve access to Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation services and resources by providing more in-person support to augment telephone and online service delivery models to ensure that those in need can gain timely and efficient access.
42. Explore the option to strike an all-party parliamentary committee to develop a comprehensive and integrated poverty reduction strategy, including legislated timelines and targets for the reduction of poverty (including child poverty) and homelessness in B.C. **(2013: #62 and 2014: #37)**
43. Adjust the SAFER grant formula to reflect CMHC average market rents to ensure equitability across B.C. and investigate opportunities to facilitate automatic enrollment for seniors who qualify for this program.
44. Explore the possibility of creating a homeowner expense deferral account to assist seniors with ongoing maintenance of their homes and to maintain residency in their homes.

Natural Resources

45. Provide strategic investment and expansion of the Province's "Buy Local" program and partner with industry stakeholders to develop implementation of a small grant program for farmer's markets in rural and remote communities. **(2013: #21 and 2014: #12)**
46. Provide expanded programs for vulnerable populations and support school meal programs, school gardens, and food literacy programs in the classroom and other community settings that promote opportunities to create direct linkages to local producers.

47. Provide support for new entrepreneurs who are pioneering Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) facilities in the province through incentives, such as investment tax credits.
48. Develop strategies to sustain forest health, the B.C. forest industry, and primary manufacturing facilities through the mid-term. **(2014: #11)**
49. Provide adequate funding to update timber, flora and fauna inventories for forestry investments and to restore and maintain biodiversity and forest ecosystem health.
50. Maintain tax credits for the mining industry and mineral exploration and collaborate with municipal, and federal counterparts to encourage policies that enhance B.C.'s competitive edge. **(2013: #8)**
51. Work with all relevant stakeholders to develop regulation and guidelines to ensure safe and environmentally sound mining practices.
52. Engage in ongoing, coordinated planning with industry, First Nations and municipal government and all other stakeholders to expand and improve the capacity of services and infrastructure in resource municipalities and rural areas.

Sport, Culture and Arts

53. Increase investment in the arts, including multiple-year funding commitments to arts, culture and heritage funding, increase the grant budget of the BC Arts Council and invest in a cultural facilities capital infrastructure program. **(2013: #51 and 2014: #47)**
54. Restore Community Gaming Grants levels to 2008 levels and provide incremental increases as gaming funds increase. **(2013: #52 and 2014: #47)**
55. Commit to stable, ongoing funding for B.C. public libraries and restore the separate public library services line item in the budget to provide transparent accounting of library funding. **(2013: #28)**
56. Explore the provision of publicly funded library services for First Nations communities on reserve, including books by mail and bookmobile services.

Transportation and Transit

57. Undertake a review of changes made to BC Ferries schedules and fares in 2014 to look for opportunities for adjustments based on social and economic impacts.
58. Invest in improvements to expand cycling infrastructure, promote cycling as an alternative transportation model and to increase cycling safety awareness and education among cyclists and drivers.
59. Commit to increased funding for public transit to provide improved services in urban centres and rural areas. **(2014: #51)**
60. Work to secure long-term, stable funding for transportation and transit infrastructure improvements. **(2014: #51)**

Public Safety

61. Provide funding for mental health courts, alternative/restorative justice models, and expanded access to legal aid and to justice initiatives in communities. **(2013: #71 and 2014: #42)**
62. Increase investment in activities that help communities prepare for earthquake, flooding and wildfire risk, and promote the adoption of FireSmart practices in areas susceptible to wildfires. **(2013: #65)**
63. Provide increased funding for wastewater/storm water infrastructure to improve resiliency for extreme weather events associated with climate change. **(2013: #66)**

Appendix A: Public Hearing Witnesses

Abbotsford Community Services, Neil Stark, Rod Santiago (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Abbotsford Hospice Society, Gaëtan Royer, Angel Elias, Bruce Kirk (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Aboriginal Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Partners Council, Northwest Regional Sport and Physical Activity Committee, Corinne McKay (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Aboriginal Sports, Recreation and Physical Activity Partners Council, Garrett Elliott (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Advocis (Financial Advisors Association of Canada), Rob Bauml (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Allied Golf Association of BC, Trevor Smith (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Altentech Power, et al., Paul Adams, Larry Taylor (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Alzheimer Society of British Columbia, Barbara Lindsay, Maria Howard (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

AMS of UBC Vancouver, Jude Crasta (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Jon Tupper, Ruth Wittenberg (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia, Gavin Dirom, Glen Wonders (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Association of Administrative and Professional Staff at UBC, Joey Hansen, Lia Cosco (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, Stephanie Smith, Simon Kelly (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

B.C. Schizophrenia Society, Sharon Evans (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

B.C. Schizophrenia Society, Terrace, Dolly Hall (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

B.C. Schizophrenia Society, Williams Lake, Cindy Charleyboy (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

BC Agriculture Council, Reg Ens, Stan Vander Waal (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, Rob Gloor (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

BC Assn for Child Development and Intervention, Jason Gordon (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

BC Association of Farmers' Markets, Elizabeth Quinn, Jon Bell (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

BC Bioenergy Network, Michael Weedon, Marnie Plant (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

BC Colleges, Lane Trotter, Colin Ewart (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

BC Food Processors Association, James Donaldson, James Pratt (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

BC Fruit Growers' Association, Fred Steele, Glen Lucas (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

BC Healthy Living Alliance, Mary Collins (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Lobat Sadrehashemi (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

BC Salmon Farmers Association, Jeremy Dunn (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

BC Wood Specialties Group, Brian Hawrysh (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

BCIT Student Association, Sameer Ismail, Dylan Smith (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

BCSPCA, Craig Daniell, Melinda Mennie (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Big Brothers Big Sisters, Rhonda Brown (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Board of Education, School District 20 (Kootenay-Columbia), Rosann Brunton (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Board of Education, School District No. 36 (Surrey), Wayne D. Noye, Shawn Wilson (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Board of Education, School District No. 38 (Richmond), Mark De Mello, Eric Yung (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Board of Education, School District No. 39 (Vancouver), Fraser Ballantyne, Janet Fraser, Patti Bacchus (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Board of Education, School District No. 43 (Coquitlam), Kerri Palmer Isaak (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Board of Education, School District No. 57 (Prince George), Brenda Hooker, Tony Cable, Bob Harris, Bruce Wiebe, Allan Reed (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Board of Education, School District No. 60 (Peace River North), Doug Boyd, Bill Shaw (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

British Columbia Association of Kinesiologists, Hardip Jhaj (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

British Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Jon Garson, Dan Baxter (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

British Columbia Chiropractic Association, Dr. Jay Robinson, Rick Nickelchok (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

British Columbia Cycling Coalition, Richard Campbell (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

British Columbia Dental Association, Peter Lobb (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

British Columbia Integrated Youth Services Initiative, Steven Mathias (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

British Columbia Lung Association, Scott McDonald (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, Gordon Li (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

British Columbia Real Estate Association, Deanna Horn, Damian Stathonikos (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

British Columbia School Trustees Association, Teresa Rezansoff (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

British Columbia Teachers' Federation, Jim Iker (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Burnaby Board of Trade, Cory Redekop, Paul Holden (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Business Council of British Columbia, Ken Peacock (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Camosun College Student Society, Andrea Eggenberger, Michael Glover (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D), John Willow, Jo-Anne Stuart Chatterley (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Canadian Bar Association, British Columbia Branch, Jennifer Chow (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Canadian Cancer Society, BC and Yukon, Barbara Kaminsky, Khairun Jivani (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Canadian Diabetes Association, Serge Corbeil, Colin Mallet, Jan Hux (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Richard Truscott (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Canadian Federation of Students, British Columbia, Steven Beasley, Megan Marshall (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Canadian Fuels Association, Brian Ahearn (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Canadian Mental Health Association, British Columbia Division, Beverley Gutray, Jonny Morris (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Canadian Mental Health Association, Kamloops Branch, Christa Mullaly (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Canadian Mental Health Association, Prince George Branch, Maureen Davis (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Canadian Taxpayers Federation, Jordan Bateman (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Capilano Students' Union, Taylor Wilson (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Castlegar Hospice Society, Suzanne Lehbauer (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Central 1 Credit Union, Helmut Pastrick, Don Wright (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Chartered Professional Accountants of BC, Richard Rees, Dr. Heather Banham (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Childhood Obesity Foundation, Dr. Tom Warshawski (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

City of Kelowna, Paul Macklem (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

City of Quesnel, Mayor Bob Simpson (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Clean Energy Association of BC, Paul Kariya (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Clean Energy Canada, Jeremy Moorhouse (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Sharon Gregson (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, John Groves (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Coastal Community Credit Union, Adrian Legin (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Coastal Invasive Species Committee, Rachelle McElroy (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

College of New Caledonia, Henry Reiser (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

College of the Rockies, David Walls (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Betty Knight, Cheryl Lenardon (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Barb Szuta, Joan Exley (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia, Dr. Doug Baer, Dr. Michael Conlon (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Co-operative Housing Federation of B.C., Darren Kitchen, Thom Armstrong (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

David Suzuki Foundation, Ian Bruce, Kyle Aben (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Dawson Creek Literacy Now, Michele Mobley (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Decoda Literacy Solutions, Brenda Le Clair, Leona Gadsby (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Sheryl Demers (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Douglas Students' Union, Ruab Waraich, Tracy Ho (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Emily Carr Students' Union, Alia Hijaab, Lori MacDonald, Gloria Han (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Ending Violence Association of B.C., Kate Rossiter (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Stephen Wilk, Mike Tierney (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Envision Financial, A Division of First West Credit Union, Shelley Besse (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Families Against Cuts to Education, Jennifer Stewart, Marlene Rodgers, Catherine Shaw, Heather Legal, Carrie Bercic (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Federation of Community Social Services of B.C., Rick FitzZaland (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, Dr. George Davison (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

FIOSA-MIOSA Safety Alliance of BC, Lisa McGuire (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Adrienne Montani (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, Bev Vandersteen (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Gabriola Island Bridge Society, Jeremy Baker (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Gateway Casinos and Entertainment Ltd., Shiera Stuart, Tony Santo (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Georgia Strait Alliance, Alexandra Woodsworth (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Geoscience BC, Robin Archdekin, Mike Cathro, Carlos Salas (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Dr. Mychael Gleeson (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Graduate Student Society at Simon Fraser University, Mark Perry, Pierre Generelli (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Great Canadian Gaming Corporation, Chuck Keeling (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Bruce Carter, Peggy Kulmala (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, Don Elliott (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Home Medical Equipment Dealers Association of British Columbia, Darryl Mackie, Robert Boscacci (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Imperial Tobacco Canada Ltd., Sébastien Charbonneau (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Independent Media Arts Alliance, Pacific Region, Emma Hendrix (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Innergex Renewable Energy, Colleen Giroux-Schmidt (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Insurance Bureau of Canada, Aaron Sutherland, Michael H. G. Lee (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Integris Credit Union, David Bird (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Interior Savings Credit Union, Gene Creelman (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Invasive Species Council of British Columbia, Gail Wallin (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Island Coastal Economic Trust, Mayor Phil Kent, Line Robert, Dallas Smith (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Island Savings, Randy Bertsch (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

John Howard Society, Central and South Okanagan, Gaelene Askeland (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, Brant Hasanen (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Jeffrey Robertson, Caroline Glover (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Kitimat Child Development Centre and Kitimat Health Advocacy Committee, Margaret Warcup, Rob Goffinet (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Kootenay Savings Credit Union, Brent Tremblay (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Kuterra LP, Garry Ullstrom (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Marlyn Graziano, Dr. Alan Davis (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Kwantlen Student Association, Alex McGowan (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

LandlordBC, David Hutniak (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Langara College, Dr. Ian Humphreys (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Langley Teachers' Association, Richard Beaudry (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Legal Services Society, Mark Benton (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Literacy in Kamloops, Fiona Clare (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Literacy Matters Abbotsford, Sharon Crowley (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Living Positive Resource Centre, Dylan Wall (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Make Transit Work Coalition, Kenya Rogers (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Mary Miller (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Motion Picture Production Industry Association of BC, Peter Leitch (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Mount Pleasant Residents Association, Stephen Bohus (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

NEBC Resource Municipalities Coalition, Colin Griffith, Mayor Bill Streeper, Mayor Rob Fraser, Mayor Lori Ackerman (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Nelson CARES Society, Advocacy Centre, Amy Taylor (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

North Island Students' Union, Jamie Lund, Jessica Sandy (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Northern Lights College, John Kurjata, Bryn Kulmatycki (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Northwest Community College, David Try (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Northwest Community College Students' Union, Madeline Keller-MacLeod, Reilly Walker, Mikael Jensen (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Office of the Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Okanagan College, Tom Styffe, Allan Coyle (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Okanagan College Students' Union, Brianne Berchowitz, Chelsea Grisch (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Omineca Beetle Action Coalition, Bill Miller (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres (PAARC), Mariane Bourcheix-Laporte (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

PacificSport Vancouver Island, Drew Cooper (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education, Maggie Milne Martens, Corine Willems, Madeleine Sauve, Gilli Avrahami (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Parksville and District Chamber of Commerce, Kim Burden (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Amanda Patt (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Peace Valley Landowners Association, Rob Botterell (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Pembina Institute, Matt Horne (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Physiotherapists for Northern Communitites, Elizabeth MacRitchie, Hilary Crowley (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Christie Ray, Lorna Wendling, Cindi Pohl, Bill Quinn (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Prince George Mental Health Consumer Council, Sandy Ramsay, Pennie-Lynn Davidson (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Private Forest Landowners Association, Rod Bealing (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Professional Arts Alliance of Greater Victoria, Heather Lindsay, Doug Jarvis (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

Progressive Contractors Association of Canada, Mike Martens (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Promotion of Wellness in Northern BC, Dr. Anne Pousette (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Prospera Credit Union, Angela Kaiser (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Prostate Cancer Canada, John Winter (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada, Angie Knott (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce, Graeme Armstrong, Amber Gregg (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Retail Council of Canada, Greg Wilson (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Rick Hansen Institute, Penny Clarke-Richardson, Bill Barrable (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Terry Robertson (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Save Our Northern Seniors, Jean Leahy, Sheila Barker (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

School District No. 23, Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Council, Lee Mossman, Shelley Courtney (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

School District No. 5, Chris Johns (7-Oct-15, Victoria)

Shore Energy Solutions, Ian Gartshore (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Simon Fraser Student Society, Kathleen Yang, Enoch Weng, Deepak Sharma, Hangue Kim (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Simon Fraser University, Andrew Petter, Stephen Dooley (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Speakbox, Aidan Scott (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Surrey Board of Trade, Anita Huberman (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Robin Tavender (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

The Research Universities' Council of British Columbia, Robin Ciceri (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia, Tammy Morin-Nakashima, Wayne Braid (13-Oct-15, Surrey)

Thompson Rivers University, Dr. Alan Shaver, Brian Ross (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association, Dr. Thomas Friedman (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Thompson Rivers University Students' Union, Amber Storvold, Nathan Lane (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Tolko Industries Ltd., Tom Hoffman (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

University of Northern British Columbia, Dr. Daniel Weeks (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

University of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association, Sean Parkinson (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

University of Victoria, Jamie Cassels (15-Sep-15, Victoria)

University of Victoria Students' Society, Kenya Rogers (16-Sep-15, Castlegar)

Valley First, First West Credit Union, Paulette Rennie (16-Sep-15, Kelowna)

Vancouver Community College Faculty Association, Taryn Thomson (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

Vancouver Island University Faculty Association, Marni Stanley (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Vancouver Island University Students' Union, Sherry McCarthy, Patrick Barbosa (17-Sep-15, Nanaimo)

Vanderhoof MenShed Society, John Alderliesten (29-Sep-15, Prince George)

Venture Kamloops, Jim Anderson (14-Sep-15, Kamloops)

ViaSport British Columbia, Sheila Bouman (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Walk-in Clinics of British Columbia, Dr. Mark Fromberg, Mike McLoughlin (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Western Convenience Stores Association, Andrew Klukas (21-Sep-15, Vancouver)

Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce, Angela Sommer (30-Sep-15, Victoria)

Lani Woodrow (14-Oct-15, Richmond)

YouthCo HIV and Hep C Society, Jesse Brown (28-Sep-15, Victoria)

Appendix B: Written and Video Submissions

L. Ellen Aboud
Alliance of Manufacturers & Exporters of Canada, Marcus Ewert-Johns
Peter L. Arcus
Brian Arkell
ArtsBC, Assembly of British Columbia Arts Councils, Kathy Ramsey
Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of BC, Keith Sashaw
Gili Avrahami
Marshall Bauman
BC Association of Institutes & Universities, Ruth Wittenberg
BC Care Providers Association, Daniel Fontaine
BC Food Systems Network, Abra Brynne
BC Games, Byron McCorkell
BC Marine Parks Forever Society, George Creek
BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Tony Roy
BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Trish Garner
BC Schizophrenia Society, Ana Novakovic
Joan M. Best
Board of Education of School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows), Karen Yoxall
Board of Education, School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast), Betty Baxter
Brain Injury Alliance, Carol Paetkau
Bruce Brandhorst
British Columbia Cattlemen's Association, Kevin Boon
British Columbia Trucking Association, Louise Yako
Holly Broadland
Marja Bulmer
Burke Mountain Naturalists, Elaine Golds
Douglas Campbell
Canadian Beverage Association, Megan Boyle
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - BC Office, Iglika Ivanova
Canadian Federation of the Blind, Mary Ellen Gabias
Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC, Neil Moody
Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, Noeline Simon
Capitol Theatre Restoration Society, Stephanie Fischer
Cariboo Cattlemen's Association, Cuyler Huffman
Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee,
City of Terrace, Alisa Thompson
William Clarke
Ellen Clements
College of the Rockies Faculty Association, Leslie Molnar
Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Timothy Shay
Community Futures Fraser Fort George, Jillian Merrick
Matt Craig
Eric Davidson
Jack Debad
Delta School District, Laura Dixon
Sandra Douwes
Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association, Elizabeth Model
East Kootenay Invasive Plant Council, Todd Larsen
Rebecca Edgett
Arthur Entlich
Michael Feller
First Nations Education Steering Committee, Tyrone McNeil
First West Credit Union, Alicia Swinamer
Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society, Lynette Grants, Katharine Steig
Friends of the South Slopes Society, Isabel Pritchard
Marjorie Gang
Genome British Columbia, Suzanne Gill
Ravijot Gill
Guardsmen Resources Inc., Douglas Sarkissian
Lori Hagelund
Natalie Hamilton
Louise Hazemi
Jacqueline Henry
Ellie Hill
Lynn Horvat
Inclusion BC, Danielle Kelliher
Islands Trust, Peter Luckham
Elizabeth Kaller
Ian Kennett
Kelley Kennett
Marnie King
Kootenay Livestock Association, Pam Turyk
Tanya Kyi
Langley Literacy Network, Kailey Erickson
Lauren Lautzenhiser
Betty Lee
LifeSciences British Columbia Society, Susan Ogilvie
Lillooet Area Library Association, Betty Weaver
Susan Lin
Literacy Prince George, Carolyn Tiefensee
Literacy Quesnel Society, Rebecca Beuschel
Roberta Long
Daniel J Q Lu
Kate Macdonell
Mary MacKinnon

Tanis Maxfield
Jason McLaren
Keith McNeill
Merck Canada Inc., Bonnie Swan
Mining Association of British Columbia, Karina Brino, Bryan Cox
Paul Moen
Trina Moulin
Anne Murray
Music Canada, Graham Henderson
Gail J. Neufeld
Barbara Neumeyer
John Michael Northcote
Terry Oh
Okanagan College Faculty Association, Tim Walters
Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, Jeremy McCall
Sheila Park
Parkinson Society BC, Jean Blake
Port Metro Vancouver, Taylor Briggs
Lisa Porter
Prince George Public Library, Shelley Stafford
Kelly Read
Nancy Rosenblum
Blaise Salmon
Wendy Santizo
Meagan Zunti
Ken Saraf
Save Our VCC, Deanne Bates
Fred Scarfe
School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows), Mike Murray
Sea Kayak Association of British Columbia, Roxanne Rousseau
Seton Portage Shalalth District Chamber of Commerce, D. DeYagher
Desmond Sjoquist
Mack Skinner
SkyTrain for Surrey, Daryl Dela Cruz
Keely Speechley
David K. Stewart
Storytellers Foundation and Houston Link to Learning, Anissa Watson
Ingrid Sulston
Summerland Food Bank and Resource Centre, John Bubb
Surrey Teachers Association, Kenji Stewart (Video Submission)
Scott Susin
Teck, Marcia Smith
The Realistic Success Recovery Society, Susan Sanderson
The University of British Columbia, Adriaan de Jager
Shon Thomas
Michael Thompson
Valia Thorburn
Trail and District Arts Council / Charles Bailey Theatre, Nadine Tremblay
University of the Fraser Valley, Jackie Hogan
Urban Development Institute, Anne McMullin
Vancouver Board of Trade, Rob MacKay-Dunn
Vancouver Public Library, Sandra Singh
Maire Walker
Annie Wang
Jennifer Watt
Carol Watterson
Jane Webster
West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund, Kendra Milne
West Kootenay Regional Arts Council, Krista Patterson
Western Silvicultural Contractors Association, John Betts
Tom Wilkinson
Corine Willems
Jim Wright

Appendix C: Online Survey Respondents

Sandra Ackermann
Andrew Adams
Cory Alfred
Alliance of Manufacturers & Exporters of Canada, Marcus Ewert-Johns
Jodi Appleton
Brent Arentsen
Heather Asselstine
Morgan Asselstine
Sharon Audley
Agnes Balzer
Natasha Barnett
Joy Barrett
Denise Baughan
Steven Beasley
Wendy Beer
Caroline Bentley
Meghan Black
Mark Bouchard
Mona Boucher
Jessica Bradford
Hilary Brown
Jack Bryceland
Abra Brynne
Tracy Byrne
Nicole Calla
Cynthia Callahan-Maureen
Lesley Carere
Ed Carter
Angie Chan
Claude Chase
Dan Chetner
Foster Chris
Coastal Family Resource Coalition, Juliet Van Vliet
Steve Cooley
Claudia Copley
Rhonda Corman
Cranbrook & District Arts Council, Sioban Staplin
Alisha Critchley
Susan Crowr
Ted Dagan
Eric Davidson
Trevor Davies
Mary Jo Dawe
Adam DeBruyn
Sal DeMare
Pam Dhasi
Marjorie Dumont
Kathy Easton
Gregory Ewanowich
Stephanie Fischer
Kim Forsch
Heather Fowlie
Tammy Frederickson
Elizabeth Fu
Amanda Fuller
Russ Fuoco
Star Fuoco
Theresa Gibbons
Emily Goodlad
Clare Gould
Stephanie Gouwenberg
Kerry Graham
Kathy Griffiths
Catherine Hall
Jessica Hannah
Marilyn Henderson
Cheryl Henshaw
Emma-Jane Hetherington
Helen Ho
Melanie Hofer
Judih Hoffman
Jade Hollenbeck
Albert Hom
Richard Hoole
Horse Council of BC, Marj Bowen
Lynn Horvat
Gwen Howard
Chris Humeston
Nicolle Hurly
Alison Ibbotson
Derek Imai
Cristina Jacob
June James
Peter James
Jacqueline Jamieson
Greta Jansen
Alan Jess
Kathryn Jickling
Gurshan Johal
Kay Johnson
Barbara Jones
Devinder Kaila
Jennifer Kimbley
Marnie King
Rodney Krenbrink
Stephanie Kulferst
Diandre Langlais
Lisa Laycock
Jun Ho Lee
Vanessa Lee
Alison Leslie
Kenneth Little
Roberta Long
Sarah Lovas
Mike Low
Alfred Lyon
Melody Ma
Jay MacArthur
Lindsay Macgowan
Jillian Maguire
Miriam Manley
Tej Mann
Alison Mason
Sue Maxwell
Sheryl McGraw
Timi McIntosh
Jacob McKay
Jason McLaren
Angel McMahon
Carly McMahon
Samrah Mian
Jennie Milligan
Erin Mills
Greg Monroe
Graham Mulligan
Arthur Myers
Brad Newell
Wendy Nielsen
Theresa Nixon
Zeke Norton
Terry Oh
Roy Osselton
Gurjit Pattar
David Petrik
Servane Phillips
Jane Pike
Gerald Pinchbeck
Angela Plagemann
Geoff Playfair
Letissia Polonia
Gary Porter
Angela Pounds
Protect Public Education Now, Marlene Rodgers
Christina Pulice-Smith
Stephen Quin
Alyson Rawes
Wayne Ray
Kelly Read
Lorraine Rehnby
Don Reid
Edward Reynolds
Joel Rhein
Virginia Richards
Randy Rinaldo
Judi Robson
Desmond Rodenbour
Melody Ross

Heike Roth
Elise Rozander
Christie Runa
Kyle Russell
Paula Ryan
Brenda Sampson
Wendy Santizo
Mike Sapic
Madeleine Sauvé
Aaron Schollen
Katherine Scrimshaw
Faith Shields
Sohale Shikarpuri
Cynthia Shore
Gurinder Sidhu
Jennifer Simpson
Nick Sinkewicz
Clare Sladden
Audrey Smith
Linda Smith
Sheree Smith
Amanda Smith-Weston
Anne Spencer
Jennifer Stewart
Mary Ellen Stewart
Ken Strain
Surrey Teachers Association, Lori McClure, Andrea Kellaway, Amanda Jones
Norman Swistak
Jenafor Tanner
Angèle Thibault
Shon Thomas
Michael Thompson
V. Thomson
Erin Tierney
Lynda Toews
Cory Tout
Trails Society of British Columbia, Leon Lebrun
Allison Tremblay
David Tremblay
Weston Triemstra
Barb Turone
Kathy Udot
Jagpal Uppal
Cynthia Van Ginkel
April Vannini
Ash Vince
Jennifer Waughtal
Lauressa Way
Clive Webber
Kim Werker
Harriet Williams
Linda Williams
Maureen Wills
Joanna Wilson
Jean Yoshida
Kathleen Young
Heather Zentner
Sonja Zoeller